Table of Contents

1. Allegiances
2. Prologue
3. Chapter 1
4. Chapter 2
5. Chapter 3
6. Chapter 4
7. Chapter 5
8. Chapter 6
9. Chapter 7
10. Chapter 8
11. Chapter 9
12. Chapter 10
13. Chapter 11
14. Chapter 12
15. Chapter 13
16. Chapter 14
17. Chapter 15
18. Chapter 16
19. Chapter 17
20. Chapter 18
21. Chapter 19
22. Chapter 20
23. Chapter 21
24. Chapter 22
25. Chapter 23
26. Chapter 24
27. Chapter 25
28. Chapter 26
29. Chapter 27
30. Chapter 28
31. Chapter 29
32. Chapter 30
33. Chapter 31
34. Chapter 32

35. Chapter 33
36. Chapter 34
37. Chapter 35
38. Epilogue
39. Trivia
40. Book #2

Allegiances

(Special thanks to Bisharps for helping me with the designs of most of the cats.) (I let her do Driftclan :p)

Vertexclan

Leader

Birdstar- A large, bulky tom with almond-shaped dark amber eyes. His fur is dark tortoiseshell. It is well-groomed and semi-long.

Deputy

Skybelly- A tall, grey, scrawny tom with a white belly.

Medicine Cat

Nova- A short, lithe she-cat with narrow blue-violet eyes. Her fur is night-black, with white heart-shaped patches.

Warriors

Buzzardgaze- A big, lanky tom. His fur is grey and tawny with a spotted tabby pattern. He has a round face with oval hazel eyes

Stagwhisper- a short, grey tom

Rockcreek- a tall, ginger tabby tom

Smokedream- a bright ginger classic tabby she-cat

Blacksting- A tom with black fur and grey socks, he has scarlet red eyes.

Scorchwatcher- A smoky black furred she-cat with orange eyes

Crownight- a white she-cat with dark tortoiseshell patches

Cloudthorn- a deep yellow mackerel tabby she-cat with green eyes

Queens

Dustshine- A she-cat with grey fur, almost black, with a white ear. She has circle-shaped ice blue eyes. She has a scar on her chest. (Mate: Blacksting)

Elders

Greenscar- A tall, well-muscled she-cat. Her fur is ginger and cream with a spotted tabby pattern. She has narrow bright yellow eyes. Greenscar has a scarred pelt.

Sunnyjaw- A massive, scrawny tom with hazel eyes. His fur is very pale golden with a classic tabby pattern, with a white on chest and white splashes.

Driftclan

Leader

Shellstar- A light grey short haired cat with dark grey speckles and a white muzzle.

Deputy

Featherdrip- Her fur is blue-gray with a spotted tabby pattern, she has light green eyes.

Medicine Cat

Otterpelt- A small she-cat with creamy brown fur, with a white muzzle and white tail. She has large blue eyes. Otterpelt has lost sight in her left eye.

Warriors

Sandcoat- His fur is cream and grey with a classic tabby pattern, with a white chest. He has narrow hazel eyes.

Hailpad- White fluffy tom with tufted white ears and small paws, his eyes are a light yellow

Apprentice, Gullpaw- A small white tom with black markings, a short bobbed black tail, he has one torn ear and amber eyes

Icejaw- A large, slender tom. His fur is grey, almost black with a classic tabby pattern. He has small, bright yellow eyes.

Rushstreak- A dark ginger she-cat, she has bright yellow eyes, a light muzzle belly and paws, and markings that look like streaks running along her sides.

Eelspeck- A dark grey tom with darker specks, his eyes are a dark green and he has tufted ears and long whiskers

Stormfish- A silver-blue tom, he has short fur and his tail is a lighter blue silver than his body, his eyes are a deep blue

Queens

Sagethorn- A large, muscular she-cat. Her fur is white, with night-black patches. She has violet eyes. (Mate: Icejaw)

Lionsplash- A golden tabby she-cat with a splash of white on her chest, she has soft green eyes and short fur. (Mate: Hailpad)

Elders

Tansytail- A little, wiry she-cat. Her fur is yellow and silky with a striped tabby pattern. She has an almond-shaped dark amber eye. Tansytail has a clawed-out eye.

Prologue

Voices could be heard meowing in the distance.

"What are we going to do?"

"Are the clans in trouble?"

"We need to warn them.."

A tall, starry furred cat slowly bounded up to a group of starry furred cats. "We will warn them when the time comes. Until then, there is nothing to worry about until that kit is born."

"What kit?" one cat asked.

"You never told us about this kit!" another exclaimed.

"Are you trying to get the clans destroyed, Foxstar?" a smaller she-cat asked.

Foxstar looked down at her. "Are you mouse-brained?" he mewed in an annoyed tone.

The she-cat looked away with a small blush. "*No*..." she huffed.

Foxstar sighed and looked back at the group. "I don't know if we should warn them yet... The threat doesn't seem that dangerous."

"I think you have bees in your brain if you decide not to warn any cat." A cat padded up from the group to Foxstar.

"Thorntail, I think we'll be fine."

"You *think,* but you don't *know.* You act like you are the leader of Starclan or something. We're all dead here! Not just you!" Thorntail hissed.

"That's enough from you, Thorntail. We will not warn them at all

because they will be *fine.*" Foxstar puffed his chest out a little after his statement.

Thorntail angrily mumbled something to himself and padded off towards the starry trees.

~

A tom with black fur and grey socks was padding down a pathway. His scarlet red eyes shown in the night. He was with a she-cat. Her fur is grey, almost black, with a white ear. It is thick and long. She has a round face with circle-shaped, ice-blue eyes. She has a scar on her chest.

"Why did you bring me out here, Dustshine?" The tom asked with a look of curiosity on his face.

"Well-" The she-cat started but got cut off.

"If it's about the thorns in your nest, then I'm sorry, okay? Who told you?" He blurted out.

"Wait, sorry for what?" She meowed with confusion.

"*So it's not that...* Well, um. What's up then?" Blacksting laughed nervously.

Dustshine sighed. "I'm having your kits, Blacksting."

Blacksting's eyes widened. He almost gasped at what his mate had just told him. He looked down at her belly to notice it wasn't normally flat. It was round.

Blacksting stood in front of his mate, staring at her belly silently. It was like he just lost contact with reality now that he knows he will be a father.

"Blacksting? Are you alright..?" Dustshine licked his cheek and nuzzled him.

The tom stood there for a second with an ominous expression on his face. "Y-Yeah, I'm fine. Just glad that I'll be a father!" He wasn't

alright, and he knew that.

He never wanted to have a litter in the first place.

Chapter 1

Vertexclan lives in a prime area with many stones, rocks, and boulders near the ocean. They could consider their clan a little "rough around the edges," according to the leader. Their clan isn't too big, nor is it too small, but they have problems though. One problem is that the leader of Vertexclan, Birdstar, wants his clan to grow quicker and get stronger so they can overpower the other clan that lives closer to the ocean: Driftclan. Another problem is that there haven't been many litters at all for very many moons. The only most recent apprentice that became a warrior is Cloudpaw, who became Cloudthorn. However, there is a pregnant queen in the Nursery and Birdstar is hoping that she has over 2 kits so they can become talented warriors. Those are the problems Birdstar has. Every other cat in Vertexclan is content and not worried about anything, except Blacksting.

Blacksting is another one warrior in Vertexclan and he's only padding outside around the Nursery anxiously because of his mate being inside it. *I hope she's okay... Is she kitting yet? probably not, she would yell, I think...* The black-furred tom thought to himself as he continued to pace back and forth in front of the nursery. A she-cat then appeared out of the nursery: It was Nova, the Vertexclan medicine cat. "Blacksting, why are you *still* here? I've told you at least 5 times now that your kits won't probably be due until next sunup, maybe even the sunup after." Her mew was a little stern.

"I know it's just that I'm worried, and I don't know if I'm ready to be a father and-" Nova placed her tail onto his maw.

"There's nothing to worry about. You'll be fine, Dustshine will be fine, and your kit or kits will be fine." Nova reassured him as she moved her tail away.

"O-Okay."

"Now go on and do something that *isn't* pacing around like a lost kit,

please!" The she-cat nudged him away from the Nursery and went back in to check on Dustshine.

I hope you're right about everything being okay... Blacksting thought to himself and headed towards the Warriors' Den.

Another cat had stopped in front of him. It was Buzzardgaze. The other tom had a slight smirk on his face as he stared at Blacksting. "Hey!" he meowed.

"Um Hi, Buzzardgaze. Do you need anything?" Blacksting replied with a hint of worry in his mew.

"Just wanted to know if you wanted to take a stroll around the territory with me?"

"You know if this a flirting attempt, then it will not work. I don't roll that way." Blacksting replied.

"Oh, great Starclan no, I have my mate and sons and I would never leave them!" Buzzardgaze replied.

"I guess you just want to talk then?"

The grey tom nodded vigorously.

Blacksting sighed and started towards the entrance of Vertexclan (which is a large open space with two giant boulders on the left and right side, and a path leading downwards towards a forest-like area), with Buzzardgaze right behind him.

-

Blacksting and Buzzardgaze were quiet for most of the stroll, then Buzzardgaze finally spoke up. "I wanted to bring you out here so I could talk to you about being a father because, from the looks of it, you seemed frightened back there."

Blacksting stopped in his tracks and turned to look at him. "Me? Frightened? No, not at all! Haha..." there was a slight shake in his mew. He also glimpsed at something in the shadows behind Buzzardgaze, but he didn't mind it too much.

"Oh, come on, everything will be okay! I remember when I first found out my mate had our litter in her belly. I almost passed out!" Buzzardgaze gave a slight chuckle.

"Hah..." Blacksting looked past Buzzardgaze to see a very dark shadowy figure of a cat just standing there. It had pure white eyes. It was slowly getting closer as he spoke with his clanmate.

"Is everything alright, Blacksting?" Buzzardgaze turned around. "There's nothing back there at all. Besides our clan, of course!" The figure was getting closer.

"I-I.." *I have to get away from that thing!* He thought, then ran away from Buzzardgaze.

"Blacksting! Why are you running away?!" the other tom chased after him.

The black tom turned around at his name, only to see the figure get closer and closer.

Blacksting slipped on something, probably a stick, and fell onto the ground. Buzzardgaze had caught up with him. "Blacksting, what's the matter with you?"

"Th-There was something-"

"I told you there was nothing behind us!"

Blacksting looked past Buzzardgaze again to see nothing but trees and plants.

"I guess you're right." Blacksting got up and shook his fur, then sighed quietly.

"Let's get back to camp, then. You don't want Birdstar on your tail now, do you?"

"No, not really..."

"Me neither." Buzzardgaze replied.

Buzzardgaze started back to camp, with Blacksting right behind him.

"*I never left.*" there was a deep mew behind Blacksting. He turned around quickly to see the figure standing right in his face.

Blacksting screamed as the figure jumped and latched onto him.

Chapter 2

Driftclan lives in a small forested area next to the ocean. Close, but not too close to Vertexclan. The leader of Driftclan, Shellstar, loves his clanmates to death. There are no problems that Driftclan has at this moment. There is only small talk about the two queens in the Nursery: Sagethorn and Lionsplash. Shellstar got worried though, about Vertexclan, they've always had a sighting of either Birdstar or his deputy Skybelly snoop around on Driftclan territory for a little while, then disappear as quick as a mouse.

"Do you think Vertexclan is planning to attack us?" Featherdrip asked her leader.

"No, Birdstar probably wants to see if we will make a move on them." Shellstar replied with a sigh after.

"Well, that's better than them attacking, I guess..." she mewed.

Featherdrip had padded off to the apprentices' den to check on Gullpaw. While Shellstar went to the elders' den himself. "Hello? Anyone home?" he peeked his head in to see Tansytail snoring softly. *Best to leave her alone then*! Shellstar thought and pulled his head out from the den. He turned around to a giant fish in front of his muzzle. He looked over at the fish to see Eelspeck carrying the fish in his maw. "Oh hi, Shellstar!" the tom dropped the fish in front of him and licked his maw.

"Hello, Eelspeck. I see you caught something nice there." he meowed to his clanmate."

"Yeah! It was a bit of a struggle to get it over here, but I had a little help from Stormfish," he replied with a smile.

"Where is he now?"

"Oh, he went to the warriors' den to get some rest."

"I'm sure he did after helping you carry *that,*" Shellstar said.

"Yeah! I will go take this to the fresh-kill pile now!" Eelspeck dragged the fish backward towards the pile.

"Alrighty then..." Shellstar yawned. "I should follow in Stormfish's pawsteps and rest a little myself." Shellstar headed off to his den to take a nap.

Sagethorn and Lionsplash were in the nursery chatting with each other. They talked about what they think their kits will look like, what they will name them, and how big they will be.

"I fear something though, Lionsplash." Sagethorn mewed.

"What is it?" She was licking the fur around her belly slowly.

"I don't know, it's just that I have a weird feeling that something terrible will happen in the moons to come..."

"I'm sure it's nothing Sagethorn, besides how can there be anything terrible when you're going to be a mother!"

Well, taking care of troublesome kits for one... She thought to herself and nodded slowly at Lionsplash, who just giggled softly.

Just then Icejaw peeked into the Nursery. "Sagethorn, are you alright in here?" he had a slightly worried look on his face.

"Yes, Icejaw, I'm fine-" Sagethorn then felt an increasing pain from her belly to her lower area. She groaned out loud.

Lionsplash's eyes widened. "Icejaw go get Otterpelt!"

Icejaw already left to get the medicine cat.

A few heartbeats later, a brown-furred she-cat came into the nursery along with a few herbs, just in case. Icejaw had a stick in his maw.

"Icejaw, could you please give the stick to Sagethorn, please? And Sagethorn just bite down onto it for me." He did as he was told and

Sagethorn bit and held the stick in her maw.

"Now Sagethorn, push as hard as you can." Otterpelt ordered.

She did as she was told and pushed; the stick broke a little, and she dug her claws into the ground. This continued until the stick was near broken, the ground Sagethorn clawed at was deep. Until a white and grey fluffy she-kit was born and suckling milk from her mother.

"Congratulations!" Otterpelt exclaimed with happiness towards the new parents of this very fluffy she-kit.

Icejaw laid himself by Sagethorn as they watched their kit happily. "What shall we name her?" He asked his mate.

"Blizzardkit..." she replied with a half-whispered mew.

"Such a beautiful name!" Icejaw nuzzled Sagethorn and purred lightly.

Because there is a blizzard of happiness coming our way! Sagethorn thought and purred.

Chapter 3

Dustshine hasn't seen Blacksting lately, and it's been worrying her. Every time she awakens she can feel herself getting closer and closer to kitting, especially now. She's felt many pains in her belly and lower area. She has to have Vertexclan's medicine cat Nova check up on her more often now. Nova would bring certain herbs that would soothe her pains. Nova came into the nursery again, "You alright, Dustshine? Are you still having pains?" she put her paw on Dustshine's belly gently.

"A little, but not a lot now, thanks to you taking care of me." Dustshine mewed back with a smile and purr.

"Aw, it's no problem. This is my duty as a medicine cat, after all!" Nova meowed proudly, puffing her chest out a little.

"Have you seen Blacksting, by any chance? I'm worried about him..."

"Oh, he was in the medicine den not too long ago. He slipped and hit his head on a rock according to Buzzardgaze-"

"Is he alright?!" Dustshine cut her off, almost jumping to her paws.

"Yes, he is now calm down. There were no injuries, and I told him to go take a rest."

Dustshine settled back down and sighed. "Ever since I told him, he will be a father, he's been acting so weird. It's like he didn't want to have kits or something... I thought he would be happy!" She laid her head onto her paws.

"I'm sure he is. He just needs some time to recollect his thoughts."

Dustshine didn't reply.

"Well, if you need anything, just holler. I'll be nearby." Nova looked back at her clanmate once more before she left the Nursery.

Does he not love me anymore? Dustshine thought as she closed her eyes.

She then felt a presence in front of her. She opened her eyes to see a set of grey paws in front of her.

Is it... Blacksting? she thought, then looked up.

There stood a black tom with his red eyes glaring down at Dustshine.

"Blacksting!" She got up shakily and nuzzled up against him, only for him to push her back onto her nest.

"B-Blacksting? What's wrong?" The pain in her lower area increased a little, but she ignored it.

Blacksting continued to give his mate an evil stare.

"Can't you tell me what's wrong-" The pains Dustshine felt before came back stronger than ever. She winced and groaned.

I-I think I'm kitting! She thought and held back a yell.

"Blacksting g-go get Nova!" She winced again as she felt more pain.

Blacksting did nothing. He just stood there with an evil gaze on Dustshine.

Dustshine would say his name again, but she clawed at the ground and yelled.

Who knew kitting hurt this much? And why isn't Blacksting doing anything? She thought.

Nova then padded into the nursery. "Hey, I heard some yelling. You alright Dustshi- Oh my Starclan!" She rushed over to her side to see a non-moving black-furred kit on the ground. Its body was lifeless. "Oh, dear..." Nova whispered.

Dustshine was panting, but she still felt a slight pain.

"Dustshine, I'll need you to push one more time for me, alright?" Nova ordered.

She nodded and pushed as hard as she could. Out came a grey-furred kit with black socks, mewling then suckling milk from its mother.

Dustshine nearly passed out. She laid her head on the side of the ground.

Nova examined both kits. They both were toms. "Sorry for your loss.." Nova frowned.

"I-It's alright," Dustshine responded.

Blacksting just stood there quietly. His expression was blank.

"Blacksting, why didn't you get me in the first place?" Nova hissed.

"Guess I didn't care enough." He replied.

"Well, you not caring enough caused one of your kits to die!" There was another hiss from her.

"It's not my fault it was *weak*." Blacksting licked his paw and rubbed it over his right ear.

Nova held back the anger that was welling up inside her and turned to Dustshine. "Did you have any names in mind for these two beautiful toms?"

"The black-furred one I'll name Sootkit and the grey one will be named-"

"Shredkit," Blacksting spoke up and cut off his mate.

"Uh, that's a pleasant name!" Dustshine purred a bit.

Nova gave a sad sigh and looked at Sootkit, who wasn't moving at all. "I'll go bury Sootkit and have a vigil for him. Do you want to come too, Blacksting?" she glared at him.

"No."

She gave a sad sigh and picked up the poor Sootkit, then took him out of the nursery.

Blacksting looked at Dustshine and Shredkit, then left the nursery as well-to-do something else that didn't involve Sootkit. Dustshine was still laying on her side, thinking to herself.

These kinds of things happen for a reason, she thought, *and I'm sure there was a reason for Blacksting's actions.*

Chapter 4

When sunup arrived, Driftclan was already stirring and awakening. Featherdrip was waiting outside near the Warriors' den for some warriors themselves to wake up so she can organize the dawn patrol. Sagethorn was up before Featherdrip because of her kit, Blizzardkit. The small and fluffy white kit opened her icy blue eyes and looked up at her mother. "Sagethorn, where's Gullpaw at? I want to play with him!" She bounced around happily.

Sagethorn smiled at her kit. "He's probably not awake yet, plus he also has things to do as an apprentice."

Blizzardkit frowned and stopped bouncing around. "I want to play though!" she went to lie next to her mother.

"I'm sure Gullpaw will play with you when he's not busy." Sagethorn attempted to lick Blizzardkit's fur the best she could, before giving up a few heartbeats later.

"Don't worry Blizzardkit," Lionsplash started, "Once my kits are born you'll have others to play whatever you want with!" she smiled.

Blizzardkit's smile came back almost instantly. "Yay!"

Blizzardkit sniffed the air to get the scent of a familiar cat. *Icejaw!* She thought.

A dark grey tom came into the nursery. It was Icejaw.

"Icejaw!" Blizzardkit exclaimed as she hopped up and trotted over to her father, nuzzling up against his leg.

"Hi there, Blizzardkit!" He purred, then looked at Sagethorn. "And Hi Sagethorn!"

"Hello there, Icejaw, did you need something?" Sagethorn meowed.

"Well, I wanted to take Blizzardkit to see the ocean with me." the

tom replied.

Blizzardkit's eyes widened, and she bounded over to Sagethorn. "Can I please, please, please go! I want to see the ocean!" She pleaded.

Sagethorn thought to herself for a moment, flicking her tail a little. "Fine, but don't stay down there for too long now..." She sighed softly.

"Yay!" The happy kit went back to her father, and they headed out of the nursery.

"Are you sure you want Blizzardkit out there this early?" Lionsplash mewed.

"They'll be fine, Icejaw will do anything to protect Blizzardkit."

"That's good." Lionsplash squirmed a bit.

*

Icejaw and Blizzardkit were padding along the shoreline of the ocean. The sun was still in the sky. "The ocean looks pretty Icejaw!" she mewed

"It does, and one day you'll get taught how to catch prey in it."

Blizzardkit's eyes sparkled, "Really?"

Icejaw smiled and laughed. "Of course! Every warrior learns how to when they are an apprentice."

"What about the prey on land?" She asked, tilting her head slightly.

"Only if you're lucky enough to catch a gull or a crab, you will."

Icejaw is so cool. I want to be like him when I'm a warrior! Blizzardkit thought as she felt the warm sand rub onto her pads.

"You'll get trained to swim as well!" Icejaw stopped for a second. "Feel the water for yourself."

Blizzardkit stopped and walked up closer to the water. It slid up towards her and touched her paws; she shivered. "It's super cold! Who would want to swim in that?"

"You'll get used to it, it's not that bad once you swim in it a few times," Icejaw reassured her.

I hope the water is super cold when I train! Blizzardkit thought.

"We should get back now, I don't want Sagethorn worrying about you too much."

"Aw, but I want to see more things with you!" Blizzardkit frowned.

"I know you do, but we can always do this again another time. Plus, don't you need to try out your first piece of prey?" Icejaw asked.

"Oh yeah! Sagethorn said I would soon!" Her frown turned back into a bright smile and she bounced around on the soft sand happily.

"Good. Let's go back then." He turned and started back to Driftclan territory with Blizzardkit by his side.

*

As the two got back to camp, Blizzardkit ran back to the nursery. "Hi, Sagethorn!" She nuzzled up against her mother, purring softly.

"How was it?" Sagethorn could smell the scent of the ocean on her kit's fur.

"The ocean was so pretty, and the sand felt so nice. I even got to touch the water! It was super cold!"

Sagethorn smiled. "I'm glad you enjoyed yourself. I have something for you though."

"What is it?" Blizzardkit's ears perked up.

Sagethorn had grabbed a tiny fish from behind her and set it in front of Blizzardkit. "Your first piece of prey!"

Blizzardkit gasped. "Really?! Yay!" She sniffed it a little. The scent reminded her of the ocean, which she had no problem with at all. She then took a bite into it. *It's so juicy and delicious!* She thought, then purred happily.

"Well, do you like it?" Sagethorn asked.

"I love it!" Her eyes glimmered as she looked up at her mother.

Sagethorn purred happily, watching her kit enjoy the prey she gave.

A few heartbeats later, Blizzardkit finished her prey. She licked her lips and laid next to her mother. "Sagethorn, I'm scared that I won't be a warrior one day."

"Why is that?" She licked Blizzardkit's fur, but once again gave up quickly, because of it sticking back up almost instantly.

"It all seems so hard! I don't know if I'll be able to do it..." She frowned and her ears dropped a little.

"Well, it might challenge you, but you just need to try your best when the time comes, and never give up." She encouraged her kit.

Blizzardkit looked at her mother and smiled. "I will!" she had laid her head onto her paws.

I won't fail you, Icejaw and Sagethorn. I'll make you both proud of me!

Chapter 5

Shredkit jolted awake. His maroon eyes looked up at Dustshine as he was shaking. Dustshine was sleeping. She was snoring softly. He prodded her side softly, hoping that she would wake up. Dustshine opened her eyes and looked at her kit. "What's wrong, Shredkit?" She gave a worried look.

"I-I had a dream you were here an-and you weren't moving..." Shredkit was still shaking. It seemed like he was close to crying.

Dustshine brought her kit closer to her. "Shredkit, it's alright. It was just an unpleasant dream. Nothing will happen to me, and everything will be fine. Just go back to sleep."

"O-Okay..." Shredkit rested his head onto his paws and went back to sleep.

A few heartbeats later, an ominous figure had walked into the nursery. Dustshine looked up to see a pair of red eyes staring down at her. It was Blacksting.

"Blacksting!" She half-whispered so she wouldn't wake up the sleeping Shredkit. "Do you need something, my love?" She gave a smile to him.

"I want you to go somewhere with me." His mew was stern.

"Wh-What about our kit?" Her smile turned into a worried look.

"Leave him. Let's go." He turned around and padded out to the nursery.

Dustshine got up gently so she wouldn't wake up Shredkit. She then went to the entrance of the Nursery and before she walked out, she gave another worried look to Shredkit and then left the Nursery.

-

Shredkit woke up again with another jolt. He had another dream of an unmoving Dustshine. He was on the verge of tears at how scary it was to see his mother unresponsive. He looked around to an empty den.

"Dustshine...?" Shredkit's voice was shaky as he tried to look for his mother around the den.

"Dustshine wh-where are you? I'm scared..." The poor kit was feeling more scared and sad at the realization that Dustshine was not there.

Tears were falling down his face. He wanted Dustshine to be by him, but she was nowhere to be found, and Shredkit got too scared to move.

She had left Shredkit there, sad and alone, for the rest of the night.

-

When dawn arrived, Shredkit was still up, but he was shaking and tired. Dustshine had disappeared, and there was nothing he could do about it. Just then a cat came into the Nursery. Shredkit looked up in hopes of it being his mother, but it was just Nova.

"Shredkit!" she quickly headed over to the poor kit. "Where is Dustshine?" She sniffed the air to catch a faint scent of Dustshine and another familiar scent that she could not identify yet.

Shredkit was too scared to respond to the Medicine Cat.

"Oh, you poor thing!" Nova quickly cuddled up against the kit. He felt freezing.

I don't want her... I want Dustshine! Shredkit then lashed out at Nova, clawing at her side, which caused her to jump away from him. He then hissed at her. "I want Dustshine!" He yelled.

"O-Okay then, I'll go find her for you. Everything will be fine." Nova's right side of her body had tiny claw marks on it, tiny bits of blood were dribbling out of the marks. Nova then left the Nursery to look for Dustshine.

Shredkit only wanted to see and be by his mother.

-

Outside of the Nursery, Nova and Skybelly were meowing to each other about Shredkit and Dustshine.

"So he will not move at all?" Skybelly mewed to Nova.

"Not unless Dustshine comes back..." she replied, then sighed heavily.

Birdstar padded up to the two. "Well, it looks like Blacksting disappeared, too." the leader hissed.

"Of course he is!" Nova started, "Ever since he got,"attacked" as Buzzardgaze said, he hasn't been acting like his normal self." she gave another heavy sigh.

"Maybe losing one of his kits, and being a father of one is getting to him," Birdstar said.

Nova glared at her leader. "I don't think to *force your mate* to *leave her kit alone* is a way to deal with being a *father,* and Dustshine is in even more trouble for even going with him!" she yelled.

Birdstar just stared at her silently, then mumbled something to himself.

Skybelly's ears perked up, and he looked towards the entrance to the camp. "Dustshine is back."

Dustshine looked around. Then she looked in front of her to see Nova, Birdstar, and Skybelly staring her down. Nova ran over to her first.

Nova unsheathed her claws. "Dustshine, wherein Starclan have you been!? Your kit lashed out at me because of him wanting you! He felt so alone and sad because he thought something happened to you!"

"I was just out for a while with Blacksting to see the ocean." She

replied, her ears lowering sadly.

"I could claw your face off right now!" Nova then had to calm herself and sheathed her claws, "I thought as a queen, you would understand how to take care of a kit, but now I'm not so sure."

"Please give me another chance! I didn't mean to leave Shredkit alone, I-I don't know what came over me. Blacksting just looked-"

"Don't even continue. I want you to go back into that Nursery and comfort your kit!" Nova ordered.

Dustshine nodded and hurried back to the Nursery.

Birdstar and Skybelly came up to Nova.

"I think you two should take care of scolding Blacksting. I need to rest." She gave one more heavy sigh and headed back to the Medicine Den.

-

Dustshine ran into the Nursery to see Shredkit laying there staring at nothing.

Shredkit looked up, and his eyes widened. He got up and ran up to his mother and nuzzled against her uncontrollably. Tears were streaming down his face. "Dustshine never leave me like that again! I thought I would never see you!" he stopped nuzzling and continued to sob.

Dustshine almost cried herself, but she gripped it back as she brought her kit closer to her. "It's alright Shredkit, I'm sorry for leaving you and I will *never* do it again..." She nuzzled up against him.

He looked up at her. "Pr-Promise?"

"I promise."

Chapter 6

A moon after Blizzardkit's stroll on the Ocean Side, Lionsplash had given birth to 3 beautiful kits: Eaglekit, a dark cream furred tom-kit with large blue eyes. Dampkit, who looks like his mother, but he has amber eyes and Thistlekit, who looks like her father, but has light green eyes. The three kits were outside of the Nursery playing a game called "Chase" where one cat chases others and whoever gets tackled is the next one to chase the other cats.

"I will get you!" Thistlekit yelled to Eaglekit.

"Nuh-uh!" They continued to run around in circles. Thistlekit was close to getting him, but he escaped before she could yank his tail.

Dampkit was sitting closer to the Nursery, watching his brother and sister play. *I wonder what Blizzardkit is doing?* He thought and padded back into the Nursery to see her. Lionsplash was the first to notice Dampkit coming it, "Hey Dampkit! Are you having fun out there?" she asked, smiling.

"I got bored and I just want to speak with Blizzardkit now!" He replied and Blizzardkit's head shot up at the mention of her name.

"Hi!" Blizzardkit gave a wide smile.

"Hello!" Dampkit mewed and laid himself next to her. "Your fur is so warm and soft!" He put a paw on her side.

Blizzardkit blushed. "It's not *that* soft..." She turned away from him.

"But it is!" He nuzzled up against her.

Sagethorn opened one eye. "Your fur is soft, Blizzardkit."

"Sagethorn!!" Blizzardkit was blushing even harder, hiding under her paws now.

Sagethorn smiled and closed her eye to go back to sleep. Dampkit

just giggled.

"We love your fur, Blizzardkit!" He purred.

Blizzardkit was still blushing and hiding under her paws. She just grunted.

"You'll become an apprentice soon, aren't you excited?" Dampkit changed the topic quickly.

Blizzardkit lifted her head and looked at Dampkit. "Uh... Oh yeah, I am for sure! I can't wait to learn how to hunt and fight!" She mewed excitedly.

"Yeah, that sounds great! It'll take me a while before I become an apprentice, though..." His ears flattened.

"Oh, don't worry, Dampkit," Lionsplash started, "Before you know it, you'll be a Warrior too!"

"Yeah!" Blizzardkit added in and Dampkit nodded happily.

*

Blizzardkit woke up with stars all around the Nursery. *Why does the Nursery look like this?* She questioned in her head. Blizzardkit looked around, Sagethorn disappeared, and so did Lionsplash and her kits. Their nests were empty. "W-Where is every cat?" she asked out loud with a slight shake in her mew.

"Don't worry, young one. This is just a dream, nothing will harm you here." A voice spoke in front of Blizzardkit, which almost made her jump. She then looked to where the voice was coming from to see an older cat standing in front of her. They looked like they had their pelt drenched with stars.

"Who are you, and why am I here?" Blizzardkit meowed.

"Who I am is not the importance of right now. What is important is that I am here to warn you of the future." The cat's voice was calm.

"The future?" She repeated.

"Yes, now listen closely." the cat started. "Be aware of the shred that is hurting its clan. If you're not careful, you will regret it." They meowed.

"W-Wait, but what does that mean?" Blizzardkit questioned with a slight panic.

"You will find out when the time comes, young one." The starry-pelted cat faded away.

"Wait!" Blizzardkit yelled, and it echoed as her vision went dark.

*

Blizzardkit woke up next to Sagethorn snoring silently, along with Lionsplash and her kits sleeping in their nest. A small light seeped into the Nursery.

That was a weird dream... Blizzardkit thought. *Why was I the one that cat came to? What does what he told me even mean?*

"Maybe I can ask Otterpelt about this..." She meowed out loud, but quietly so she wouldn't wake any other cat up.

Chapter 7

Blacksting laid in his nest in the Warriors' den, trying to sleep peacefully. Until two other cats barged in, disturbing his rest. He looked up to see the muzzles of his clan leader, Birdstar and the clan deputy Skybelly.

"Something wrong?" Blacksting yawned.

"*Something wrong*?" Skybelly repeated, with a hint of anger in his mew. "What are your reasons for taking a mother away from her kit?!" the deputy yelled.

Birdstar sighed. "I'm sure there is a better way to do this than yelling-"

Blacksting cut off Birdstar, "She was the one who wanted to come with me. I never asked her to, and Shredkit is alive, isn't he? So what's the problem?" He snarled back at Skybelly.

Skybelly's anger was rising. "The *problem* is that your *kit* got worried *sick* about his mother and was alone until sunup!" He hissed, unsheathing his claws now.

"Alright! That's enough of this." Birdstar had stopped them both from continuing.

"Blacksting, you never should have left camp while it was dark and without telling another cat. And have told Dustshine to stay with her kit and not leave with you. Now I don't want to hear about stuff like this again, or there will be consequences." Birdstar had an unpleasant look on him.

"Sure thing, o brilliant leader of mine." Blacksting replied sarcastically.

Skybelly growled low and left the Warriors' den.

Birdstar turned to leave, but before he did, Blacksting spoke up.

"You better watch your paws, Birdstar, or you'll disappear like the *Goatweed* you consume." He said.

Birdstar turned around instantly. "How do you know about that-" He then realized Blacksting was fast asleep.

I'll question him about it... later... Birdstar thought as he left the den.

Blacksting opened one eye and gave a quiet laugh as he shut it again.

*

In the Nursery, Shredkit huddled very close to his mother. He wanted to make sure she didn't leave him again.

A she-cat came into the Nursery, it was Nova. Shredkit looked up at her and frowned a little. *I hope she's not mad at me for being mean to her...* Shredkit thought.

"Hi, Shredkit!" She meowed happily.

Shredkit got a confused look on his face. He tilted his head to the side a little.

She looked at him. "Something wrong?"

"Aren't you mad at me for hurting you?" Shredkit mewed.

"Why would I be mad? It's not your fault you acted that way."

"B-But I hurt you!" He looked at the tiny scars on her side.

"Oh, Shredkit, I'm fine and you are not at fault for the way you acted." She reassured him and glanced at Dustshine, who was sleeping.

"Are you sure...?"

"Very." She looked back at Shredkit and nodded. "Now, have you slept at all?"

He shook his head, then yawned as he realized how tired he was.

"Well, please try to. Your apprenticeship is coming soon and you'll need all your strength!" Nova meowed and smiled.

"Okay..." He laid his head onto his paws.

"I will check back later." She whispered, then left the Nursery.

I'm glad she isn't mad, but being an apprentice sounds very scary... Shredkit thought as he closed his heavy eyelids and fell asleep.

*

Shredkit heard voices. He opened his eyes quickly. It was dark in the Nursery and he didn't feel Dustshine next to him. "D-Dustshine?" The poor kit was panicking at the realization of his mother being gone. Tears were falling from his eyes.

Come here... There was a voice from outside the den. Shredkit looked up with tear-filled eyes and tiny streams falling down his cheeks. "Wh-who's there?" He mewed. He then got up and padded outside of the Nursery. When he was outside, there were many dead and decaying trees around him. The sky was dreary, and the grass seemed like something had scorched it. The pathway in front of Shredkit looked long, and it was full of dying trees on both sides of it.

A stray and black silhouette of a cat had appeared from behind one tree.

"Hey! Who are you and where's Dustshine?" Shredkit yelled to the cat.

The shadow cat ran off into the distance.

"Where are you going!?" Shredkit ran after the cat.

Shredkit ran after the shadowy cat for a little while until he turned and ran into some dead trees.

I have to catch up with him... He turned to where the cat had run. Once he turned into the trees, there was a moment of nothing under him before he tumbled down what seemed to be a steep, tiny hill.

Shredkit kept hitting a bunch of dead branches, rocks, and small shrubs before he plopped onto the dying ground again.

His nose was bleeding, and one of his front legs was bleeding as well from a slightly deep cut.

"O-ow..." He was trying to hold back tears and be strong.

There's no point in looking for Dustshine. She doesn't care about you. The voice whispered from somewhere close.

"She does! You're lying and I won't believe you!" Shredkit yelled.

Shredkit heard a rustle from one bush in front of him. Out jumped a blood-stained fox. It bared its teeth and stared at Shredkit with its cold, darkened eyes. A scarlet red color stained the teeth of the fox.

I have to get out of here before I die! He thought, then ran into the bushes next to him. The fox quickly started after him and caught up with him in almost an instant.

Shredkit got his tail caught in one bush and he couldn't move. There was a heavy breath he could feel on his neck, and he didn't have to turn around to know what it was. The fox quickly opened its maw, but before it could clamp down onto the poor kit:

Shredkit woke up with a tremendous jolt.

He was panting heavily, and tears were still streaming down his face. Dustshine was next to him, and the den was still bright, and the sun was still showing itself through the Nursery.

Dustshine smiled and looked at Shredkit, "Well, look at who's up." She mewed and licked his fur. "Your fur is unkempt, Shredkit."

"D-Dustshine...?" His mew quivered as he looked up at her.

Dustshine noticed her kit was crying and almost gasped. "Shredkit! What happened?"

"I-I had a dream of a scary fox, an-and you weren't there..." He replied.

"Oh, you poor thing." Dustshine pulled her kit closer to her and nuzzled him intensely. "You do not have to worry now, there are no foxes that will harm you here." She said with a soothing mew.

Shredkit hoped that his mother would stay with him forever.

Chapter 8

Inside the Nursery, Blizzardkit was bouncing up and down excitedly as she was being made an apprentice soon. "I can't wait!" She squealed happily.

"Calm down there, Blizzardkit," Sagethorn chuckled as she flicked her tail to signal her kit to come over to her. She obeyed and plopped herself down by Sagethorn, who began licking her fur.

"Aw, Sagethorn! You don't have to lick my fur!" Blizzardkit protested.

"I guess you're right, your fur is very hard to clean, anyway." Sagethorn smiled at Blizzardkit. The fluffy-furred kit had gotten up and bounced around again. Dampkit was just watching her silently.

She noticed him and stopped, blushing a little "You okay there, Dampkit?" she asked.

Dampkit shook his head at the call of his name. "O-oh yeah! I'm fine! You must be thrilled, huh?"

"Yeah!" Blizzardkit gave an enormous smile, and Dampkit smiled back.

"I don't want to be an apprentice because you must get the elders' ticks off their fur all the time!" Eaglekit mewed.

"Well, they will only make *you* do it, Eaglekit." Thistlekit snickered.

"I'll get you for that!" Eaglekit jumped on his sister and wrestled with her.

"Hey get off me mouse-brain!" Thistlekit was trying to get him off her.

"Both of you calm down, please!" Lionsplash meowed sternly and sighed.

The two kits stopped and sat up next to each other. "Sorry, Lionsplash." They mewed in unison.

Blizzardkit and Dampkit giggled after they watched little quarrel happen.

A white tom had padded into the Nursery. Blizzardkit was the first to notice. "Gullpaw!" She said excitedly and bounded up to him.

Lionsplash noticed next, "Oh, Hi Gullpaw." She smiled.

Gullpaw smiled back, "Hi Blizzardkit and Lionsplash."

"What are you doing here?" Blizzardkit questioned.

"I just came to congratulate you before you become an apprentice. I am becoming a Warrior soon." He puffed his chest out a little.

Blizzardkit gasped, "Really!? I am super happy for you!" She nuzzled against him.

"Congratulations Gullpaw! I'm sure Hailpad is proud of you." Lionsplash purred.

Just then there was a voice that could be heard from outside of the Nursery.

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" The voice yelled.

Every cat that had been in the Nursery came out and once Blizzardkit came out next to Sagethorn, she saw who was yelling: The Driftclan leader, Shellstar. Sandcoat and Rushstreak looked up from eating a seagull. Icejaw, Eelspeck, and Stormfish came out from the Warriors' den. Featherdrip, Hailpad, and Otterpelt appeared from out of the Medicine den. Those who were not at the Tide Pool had come to it.

"I have gathered you all here because there will be a new warrior and a new apprentice. Gullpaw, please come forward." Shellstar meowed.

Gullpaw stepped up to the Tide Pool.

"Gullpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" The clan leader asked.

"I do."

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Gullpaw, from this moment you will be known as Gullstalk. Starclan honors your enthusiasm, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan." He mewed.

"You may dip your nose in the Tide Pool," Shellstar added.

Gullstalk dipped his nose into the water and took it out.

"Gullstalk! Gullstalk! Gullstalk!" the clan cheered.

Gullstalk proudly padded back over to Hailpad, who smiled at him brightly.

"Now, Blizzardkit, please step forward."

Blizzardkit padded up to the Tide Pool. *I've never seen the Tide Pool before, it looks so cool!*

She looked at Shellstar, her eyes glittering.

"From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Blizzardpaw. Your mentor will be Sandcoat. I hope Sandcoat will pass down all he knows on to you." He signaled his tail to Sandcoat for him to come to the Tide Pool. Sandcoat went up next to Blizzardpaw.

"Sandcoat, Eelspeck has given you amazing training. You will mentor Blizzardpaw and I expect you to pass down all you know to Blizzardpaw."

Sandcoat dipped his head to Shellstar.

"You both may dip your noses in the Tide Pool," Shellstar meowed.

They did and then took their noses out.

"Blizzardpaw! Blizzardpaw! Blizzardpaw!" the clan cheered.

Sandcoat turned to Blizzardpaw and smiled, "It will be fun mentoring you!" He gave a slight smile and purred.

"I can't wait to start!" Blizzardpaw replied as she contained her excitement.

Blizzardpaw then trotted up to Icejaw and Sagethorn, who were sitting right next to each other. "Congratulations!" Sagethorn mewed and nuzzled her.

"You will be an excellent warrior, and I know it!" Icejaw nuzzled his kit.

"Thank you both! I will try my hardest to make you both proud!" Blizzardpaw replied, puffing out her chest a little.

"The clan meeting is now over!" Shellstar meowed out loud.

Chapter 9

Inside the Leaders' den, Birdstar and Nova were both chatting about something until another cat came in and interrupted them: It was Blacksting. Both Birdstar and Nova looked at him. Nova was the first to speak.

"What do *you* want?" Nova remembered how Blacksting did not want to sit a vigil for Sootkit.

"I wish to speak with Birdstar *alone*, but I can't do that with *you* in here." Blacksting retorted.

"I'm sure you can speak with both of us in here." Birdstar spoke up before Nova could meow anything more and start an argument.

Blacksting left the den for a bit and then came back with a certain plant in his maw. "Now you see why?" he said with muffled words.

Nova was trying to identify what plants Blacksting had, but she couldn't lay her paw on it.

"Nova, please leave my den for a little while." Birdstar meowed, sounding more serious than before.

"But Birdstar-"

"*Please*." His mew was stern.

Nova sighed and left the Leaders' den, mumbling something to herself.

Blacksting dropped the plants out of his maw. "You like eating this, don't you?"

"What do you want, Blacksting, and how in Starclan do you know about the goatweed?" Birdstar asked.

"I have my ways, but I am here to make a deal with you." Blacksting

gained an evil look on his face.

"What deal?"

"My kit Shredkit is becoming an apprentice today."

"Yeah...?"

"I want you to make him *my* apprentice. If you do so, I won't destroy your source of goatweed." Blacksting meowed.

"You won't do *what*?!" Birdstar almost jumped up.

"You heard me."

"How do I know this isn't some kind of trick, Blacksting?"

"The only reason you sneak around Driftclan territory is to make sure your goatweed farm hasn't gotten discovered." He quickly shot back.

Birdstar went silent.

Blacksting smirked.

"Just allow me to train Shredkit and all will be fine."

"F-Fine..." Birdstar's paws were shaking a little.

"Great! You can take this then as a little gift from me." He nudged the goatweed towards Birdstar.

"You can take your leave now," Birdstar ordered.

"Sure thing! But uh, One more thing." Blacksting turned back around, "If you interfere with my training, I will take away everything you love." His mew was lower this time, and the evil face he had before had returned.

Birdstar gave no response to that and watched as his clanmate left his den.

Outside of the leaders' den, Blacksting stopped and looked at Nova.

"Don't you interfere, either. Just do your job and question nothing. Or I will ruin you, Nova of *Galaxyclan*."

Nova gasped. "How do you know about-"

Blacksting padded away without looking back.

*

Shredkit didn't get sleep at all. He didn't feel as tired as he thought he would be. He noticed his mother Dustshine shifting and moving; she was waking up. Shredkit sighed. He knew he would become an apprentice soon, and he didn't want to leave the Nursery at all.

"Shredkit, you will become an apprentice. Aren't you excited?" She purred happily and licked his fur clean.

"Ye-yeah, I am!" Shredkit's voice was a little shaky.

"I'm glad." She continued licking.

"My fellow clanmates of Vertexclan, gather around the Sharp Stone for a clan meeting!" It was the voice of Birdstar coming from outside of the Nursery.

"Well," Dustshine got up, "It's time!" She smiled and nudged Shredkit to get up.

I don't want to leave the nursery though... Shredkit thought to himself and whimpered as he and Dustshine left the Nursery. The warriors and the medicine cat gathered by the Sharp Stone, which was in the middle of the camp. Skybelly was sitting right next to Birdstar.

"I shall appoint a new apprentice now, Shredkit, please step forward." Birdstar meowed.

Shredkit came up, his legs shaking as he stood in front of Birdstar.

"You are of age to become an apprentice. From this day on, until you are of age to be a warrior, you will be known as Shredpaw and your mentor will be-" Birdstar hesitated and looked at Blacksting, who just gave a blank stare. "Blacksting." The black cat padded over

next to Shredpaw.

Blacksting will be my mentor?! Shredpaw thought. He's never seen his father much in the Nursery until now, and Dustshine only mentioned him once to him. Shredpaw was shaking more now at the thought of what his father would think of him.

"Buzzardgaze has taught you well, and I expect you to pass on what you know to Shredpaw." Birdstar said.

Blacksting turned to Shredpaw and touched noses with him. He gave a low growl that only Shredpaw heard. It made him step back a little in fear.

"Shredpaw! Shredpaw! Shredpaw!" Vertexclan cheered.

"The clan meeting is over now." Birdstar said, then headed back to his den. All the other cats had dispersed except for Blacksting, Dustshine, and Shredpaw.

"I'm surprised you two got paired!" Dustshine meowed and would go nuzzle Shredpaw, but Blacksting stopped her.

"Leave us alone and go do something that doesn't involve you bothering us," he hissed at her.

"O-oh... Sure thing!" She padded off to the fresh-kill pile, which was close to the medicine den.

Blacksting turned and looked at Shredpaw. "We'll start tomorrow." He went back to the warriors' den.

Shredpaw stared at his father as he went back with a *very* frightened look on his face.

Chapter 10

Otterpelt padded into the Leaders' den. She noticed Shellstar was sleeping, so she went up to him and gently prodded him with her paw. "Hey, Shellstar, I will go to the Ocean Side with Vertexclan's medicine cat Nova, if that's okay with you?" She asked, her tail swaying.

Shellstar looked up at her and yawned. "Sure, just be careful, alright?" he meowed.

"I will." She dipped her head to her leader and left his den.

Once she left, she looked towards the entrance to see two cats talking to each other. It was Rushstreak and Nova.

She's here sooner than I thought! Otterpelt thought and started over to the two other she-cats.

"What are you doing on Driftclan territory?" snarled Rushstreak.

"No need to get so hostile. I'm only here for Otterpelt." Nova calmly mewed back to her.

Otterpelt quickly came up. "Yeah, don't worry about it Rushstreak, We're just going to the Ocean Side!" she said.

"Alright then." She looked at the two medicine cats for longer before she padded off.

"You ready?" Nova asked Otterpelt.

"Yes, let us go now."

The two medicine cats started their way to the Ocean Side.

*

It didn't take them long to get close to it at all because of Driftclan

living very close to the ocean, anyway.

"So how are things going for you?" Nova meowed.

"Everything's fine, just a few aching paws to treat really," Otterpelt replied and laughed a little.

"How about you?" She added.

Nova thought about the recent events that happened and decided to not talk about it. "Same old here... Dustshine kitted a while ago and had 2 kits. Unfortunately, one of them is with Starclan now."

"Sorry to hear that," Otterpelt said.

"It's alright. Did Sagethorn and Lionsplash kit yet?"

"They did. Sagethorn has one kit and Lionsplash has three. All of them were healthy."

"That's good." Nova said, then noticed that they were getting close to the Ocean Side.

The two medicine cats stood by the ocean, watching it closer to them, then going back steadily.

"Been a while since we've done this." Otterpelt meowed to Nova.

"Hopefully there's something important Starclan has to tell us both." the black she-cat laid herself down into the sand and closed her eyes.

Hopefully... Otterpelt thought and laid next to the Vertexclan medicine cat and closed her eyes.

*

Otterpelt opened her eyes. There were stars all around her, and Nova was standing right next to her.

"I figured we would see different things, but I guess I was wrong this time." Nova mewed while looking around.

"I've been expecting you two." There was a voice in front of them. They instantly shot a look at who was talking.

Otterpelt widened her eyes at the cat that was standing there.

"Thorntail!" She did her best to hold back tears, but they soon came down her face.

Nova looked at Thorntail. "I assume you know who this is?"

"Yes, it's the cat who trained me to be the medicine cat I am now." she mewed.

Thorntail smiled a little, but it quickly faded. "Unfortunately, there's no time for catching up right now. I have to give you two important messages."

"There was a prophecy that was never given because of a disagreement in Starclan," he started.

"Why weren't we notified sooner?" Nova asked eagerly, getting angry.

"Calm down," the old Driftclan medicine cat continued, "An old leader somehow convinced every cat not to give the prophecy out, but I would not follow their lead." he almost hissed at the thought of what happened.

"Well, please tell us Thorntail!" Otterpelt begged.

Nova and Otterpelt realized he was fading away slowly.

"I thought I would have more time!" He gave a vast sigh.

"Hurry and tell us!" Nova demanded.

"The blizzard will stop the sh-"

Thorntail had disappeared, and Otterpelt and Nova had woken up by the Ocean Side.

"Fox-dung!" Nova hopped up and hissed.

Otterpelt got up, "Looks like we will have to find out ourselves..."

Nova gave a very huge sigh. She got annoyed now. "What he said could mean anything, though! He didn't even get to finish! Both of our clans could be in trouble now!" the she-cat paced back and forth, but then Otterpelt stopped her.

"Hush now before I throw you in the ocean to cool off," the brown-furred she-cat said. "We will get through this and find out the rest of the prophecy together. Plus, I am sure there will be omens," she meowed.

Nova stared at Otterpelt for a second, thinking about what to say.

"Fine, you're right."

"Alright then let's get back to our clans before they worry about us." she put her tail on Nova's shoulder.

"Maybe in one or two moons we could have a gathering with each other's clans." Otterpelt added.

"I know Shellstar won't mind, but Birdstar might be tough to convince." Nova mewed as they headed back to their clans.

Chapter 11

Blizzardpaw woke up in the Apprentices' den. She was the only one in there because of her being the only apprentice in Driftclan right now. *I kind of miss being in the Nursery with Sagethorn, it's very lonely in here...* She thought and stretched herself out in her nest. Blizzardpaw didn't mind being alone in the Apprentices' den for a while. She knew that Dampkit, Thistlekit, and Eaglekit would become apprentices themselves in about a moon. *Then it'll be more fun in here!* Blizzardpaw almost meowed out loud. She got up from her nest and stretched once more before heading out of the den.

"Nice to see you awake, Blizzardpaw." A low meow came from beside her, which nearly made her jump.

She turned to see who it was; it was just Sandcoat sitting there calmly, cleaning his fur.

"Sandcoat, you scared me!" Blizzardpaw mewed.

"Forgive me, but we will train soon." He meowed back.

Blizzardpaw gasped. "Really?! I can't wait!" She bounced around happily like a kit.

Sandcoat gave a tiny purr, "I'm glad you are excited, but let us share a piece of fresh-kill so we can have energy." the nearly cream-furred tom said.

"Alright!" Blizzardpaw replied and headed over to the fresh-kill pile with Sandcoat following right behind her.

*

After the two shared a nice fish, Sandcoat flicked his tail to signal Blizzardpaw to follow him. He led her to an area was behind Driftclan. There were many more trees here than around Driftclan itself.

Sandcoat stopped and turned to Blizzardpaw. "Are you ready for your first lesson?" Sandcoat asked.

"Yeah! What are we doing? Hunting? Fighting?" Blizzardpaw quickly replied with an enormous smile on her face.

"We will meditate," He meowed.

Blizzardpaw sat down and tilted her head to the side. "Meditating? What's that?" She questioned.

"It's where you close your eyes and focus on one thing in your head and achieve a calm and stable state."

"That sounds boring." Her ears flattened, and she frowned a bit.

"It may sound that way, but it allows us Driftclan cats to hunt like this." The tom closed his eyes and carefully got into the hunter's crouch.

Do... what? Blizzardpaw thought.

Sandcoat stayed in the same position for a few heartbeats and then quickly ran behind a tree to his right and stopped for a moment before coming back with a bird Blizzardpaw hadn't seen before.

Her jaw dropped as she saw what her mentor had done. "Woah!"

He dropped the bird in front of her. "I almost lost it there, but anyway, catching fish and seagulls is very tough sometimes, but when you meditate before you hunt, it makes things much easier." Sandcoat smiled at her reaction.

"I want to try!" Blizzardpaw mewed eagerly.

"Alright, but for now, I just want you to focus on the sounds around you and try not to move." her mentor ordered.

Blizzardpaw closed her eyes and listened carefully. She could hear the tiny breeze that was blowing by her, some birds making noises and the leaves on the trees and bushes rustling, but she heard pawsteps behind her. They were very light.

Is that Sandcoat behind me? She thought, then twisted around. "Sandcoat?", she whispered.

Whatever was standing in front of Blizzardpaw pounced on top of her and pinned her down. She gasped when it happened and opened her eyes to see her mentor pinning her.

"Splendid job for turning around, but what you should have done is go for the pin as I did," Sandcoat said and got off his apprentice.

"Aw..." She frowned and got up herself.

"Don't worry, Blizzardpaw." he began. "I just wanted to have you meditate for now. I won't be teaching you how to fight yet. Did you hear any other sounds while you were meditating, though?"

Her frown quickly turned into a smile as her eyes glittered. "Yeah!! I heard the trees and bushes, and what I think were birds?" she mewed.

"Great! That means we're off to a wonderful start. I want you to meditate when you can from now on and focus on everything around you and maybe sniff out for scents," Sandcoat told her.

"I will!"

Sandcoat smiled at Blizzardpaw. He could see how determined she was to become a warrior. "Let's get back to camp now." he padded back towards where Driftclan was with Blizzardpaw right on his tail.

*

Once they got back to camp, Sandcoat turned to the fluffy white apprentice. "I will go rest for a little, we're finished for now." He meowed.

"Okay!" Blizzardpaw replied as she watched her mentor go to the Warriors' den.

"Hey, Blizzardpaw!"

She looked to her right to see her father Icejaw standing there, smiling at her.

"Icejaw!" She ran up to him and nuzzled him.

"How's being an apprentice so far?"

"It's great! I watched Sandcoat catch a bird, and I learned how to meditate!" She mewed excitedly.

"I'm happy for you-"

"Hey, Icejaw! I need you!" It was Shellstar yelling from the entrance for Icejaw.

"Well, looks like Shellstar needs me. We can speak to each other later!" He ran over to the leader.

I'll still be making you proud of me, Icejaw! Blizzardpaw happily thought.

Chapter 12

(A/N: Things will get more intense.)

Shredpaw didn't get any sleep. He's alone in the Apprentices' den, and he's never felt so alone since Dustshine left him in the Nursery alone once. *I miss being next to Dustshine... It feels so cold without her...* Shredpaw thought. He was on the verge of crying again, but he didn't want to cry.

Well, you have me!

Shredpaw quickly looked around. "Wh-who said that?"

Me!

Shredpaw was getting angry. "Who are you?! And why can't I see you?"

Well, I'm-

"Shredpaw, what are you doing?" There was a meow from in front of him. It was Blacksting.

"N-Nothing..." He replied, looking away from his father in fear.

"There's no other cat in here, but you Shredpaw." His meow was stern.

"We-well, you're in here now-" Blacksting cut him off by scratching his left ear with his claws.

"Don't get smart with me, you worthless runt!" He hissed at the poor Shredpaw.

Shredpaw was more frightened now than he was before. How could his father bear to be mean to him like this?

"We train soon, and I want to leave soon. So be ready or Sagethorn

will pay for your faults." He snarled, then left the den in a heartbeat.

But why would he do that to Sagethorn? Shredpaw almost crying at the thought of his mother getting harmed by him.

Shredpaw got up from his nest and attempted to stretch, but it didn't help him at all. He then padded out of the Apprentices' den to a quiet Vertexclan. The camp wasn't vivacious, probably because there are few cats in the Vertexclan, but that's just a hunch.

Shredpaw didn't know any other cats in his clan beside Dustshine, Birdstar, Nova, and Blacksting, but could Shredpaw consider Blacksting a cat he knows?

If I ever had kits of my own, I would never treat them like this... Shredpaw thought as he headed to the fresh-kill pile. Blacksting stopped him in his tracks with a half-eaten piece of prey. "Here, I saved some for you. That's all you'll get." He dropped it right in front of Shredpaw. "Hurry and eat it." The black tom padded off again.

Shredpaw sniffed the piece of prey. It smelled rotten. "W-well I can't go hungry I guess..." He sighed and took a bite of the prey, which nearly made him throw up, but he gulped it down, anyway. He didn't finish it because if he kept on eating it, he would get sick.

"I knew you wouldn't finish it, you're such a weakling," Shredpaw jumped and turned to see Blacksting behind him, already looking angry. "Let's go, I'm not waiting any longer for you." He headed towards the entrance and out. Shredpaw pursued him. He didn't want Blacksting to scold or harm him again.

*

The two toms arrived at their location: the Ocean Side.

"Come with me closer to the water," Blacksting ordered as he padded into the water himself a little. Shredpaw followed.

I guess he will teach me to swim...? Shredpaw thought.

Blacksting got closer to the ocean. It was a little deeper than before, and Shredpaw had followed.

"Wh-when will we start-" Suddenly, Shredpaw felt a heavy force push his head down muzzle first into the water below his paws. He squirmed around a ton, trying to get his maw out of the water.

"I've trained you a little differently, and this is how we'll start," Blacksting smirked as he watched his son squabble around and still try to get his maw out.

I can't... Breathe... Thoughts were quickly running through Shredpaw's mind as his father continued to hold his head down.

Shredpaw's vision was slowly fading out and his movement slowed.

Until Blacksting removed his paw from Shredpaw.

Shredpaw quickly pulled his head up and gasped for a huge breath of air. He was panting heavily, along with water dripping down his muzzle.

"Why... Did you d-do that to me...?" He questioned his father's actions, to which he had no response to at all.

Blacksting pushed Shredpaw's head back down into the water, keeping it there for a while again, before he nearly blacked out once more.

Blacksting repeated this near drown process for a while.

*

Back at Vertexclan camp, Shredpaw ran as fast as he could back into the apprentice den. Instead of going to his nest, he ran into the corner of the den and cried, tears falling onto the ground he laid at.

Blacksting just stood at the entrance for a bit. "We'll continue your training later." he meowed, then left.

Shredpaw continued to cry. "I-I want Dustshine!" he yelled.

Don't worry, friend! Everything will be okay! The voice Shredpaw heard from earlier said.

"No, it *won't*!"

Chapter 13

Blizzardpaw didn't want to wake up. She was sleeping peacefully until the sun shone on her in the Apprentices' den. "I don't want to get up yet...!" she protested at nothing as the fluffy apprentice slowly opened her eyes. Blizzardpaw squinted as the sun continued to shine on her. *Well, maybe I can meditate as Sandcoat said...* She thought and sat up, then closing her eyes and steadied her breathing. There weren't any sounds to listen to, but it felt relaxing and calm to do it.

Blizzardpaw's ears shot up as she heard pawsteps coming from outside the Apprentices' den. She tried to sniff out the scent of what cat it was as it got closer, but she couldn't identify it at all. *I need to wait until their pawsteps get closer for me to pounce...* Blizzardpaw thought as the pawsteps now came into the den.

Closer... Closer...

Now!

She pounced on whatever or whoever was in front of her and pinned it down.

"H-Hey!" the mew was from a tom, Blizzardpaw opened her eyes to see a smaller version of Lionsplash in front of her. It was Dampkit.

Blizzardpaw quickly got off him and blushed. "Sorry! I thought you were Sandcoat trying to sneak up on me while I was meditating..." She mewed to Dampkit.

He blushed and got up. "It's alright... I'm fine," he replied, licking some furs on his chest.

"What are you doing here, anyway?" Blizzardpaw asked, tilting her head to the side a bit.

"I just wanted to check on you. Since you are the only apprentice in

here, I just wanted to make sure you weren't lonely." Dampkit blushed again, looking away shyly.

Blizzardpaw gave a bright smile and went over to Dampkit to nuzzle him. "Aw, you're so sweet!" she purred.

Dampkit's fur got hot with embarrassment, so he just froze there.

"Well, I will go find Sandcoat now! Bye! ~" She licked his cheek and left the Apprentices' den.

Dampkit stood there, his fur still hot, and gave a tiny mew.

*

Blizzardpaw and Sandcoat were behind Driftclan territory again.

"I'll be teaching you two things." Sandcoat started. "First, I'll be seeing how well you can track a cat. Then we will hunt for a bit!" He meowed.

Blizzardpaw smiled. "Yay!"

"Okay, close your eyes for a little while, then try to find me." the mentor instructed.

Blizzardpaw nodded and closed her eyes. She heard pawsteps quickly going away from her.

I guess we're playing hide and seek then! She thought, then kept her eyes closed for a little longer.

A few heartbeats later, Blizzardpaw opened her eyes to see her mentor completely gone. Before she tracked his scent, she looked in the bushes on both her left and right side first and behind the trees. *Okay, tracking time!* She thought, then sniffed the air. It took her a little while before she caught the scent trail, but when she did, she ran down the path Sandcoat had chosen.

She ran a little farther down the path away from Driftclan and then stopped to sniff the air. *It seems like he went... This way!* She ran into a bush on her right. Doing her best to keep track of Sandcoat's

scent, since the smell of the bushes messed with the trail.

Blizzardpaw continued through a few more bushes and took a few more turns until she ended up at a small, flowing stream of water. *His scent ends here... So where is he?* The young apprentice thought as she looked around. *Maybe I can use my meditation to find out!* She sat on her hindquarters and closed her eyes. She calmly breathed as she tried to listen for any pawsteps around her, but all she heard was the stream flow.

What she didn't notice is Sandcoat standing right beside her.

Sandcoat's scent is powerful! He has to be close by! She thought.

"Ahem," he said.

Blizzardpaw looked at him momentarily before looking back and closing her eyes, "Oh hi Sandcoat."

She glanced back, "Wait, Sandco-" Blizzardpaw got pounced on and pinned down by Sandcoat once more.

"You were close, but you stopped and thought my scent ended there." He mewed.

"Aw!" She pouted and looked away, a bit embarrassed.

Sandcoat got off of her and smiled. "It's okay. The next time we do this, you'll get me for sure!" the cream tom encouraged her.

Blizzardpaw got up as well and smiled, "I won't let you down, Sandcoat!"

He chuckled. "Good to know! Now let's get back to camp before some cat worries about us," He meowed.

"But what was the second thing we would do?" Blizzardpaw asked eagerly.

"Oh, we were just going to hunt a little, but we can do that on the way back."

"Yay!"

*

Back at Driftclan camp, Sandcoat and Blizzardpaw sat next to each other close to the Medicine cat den. They were sharing a nice gull that Sandcoat had found in the fresh-kill pile. Otterpelt had come out the den with Stormfish right behind her.

"Now if your paw acts up again, let me know." she meowed.

"I will, thank you, Otterpelt." Stormfish replied and dipped his head, then headed back to the Warriors' den.

The medicine cat looked over at the two cats eating the gull. "Hey Blizzardpaw and Sandcoat!" She mewed happily.

"Hi!"

"Hello."

"How's the training going so far?" She asked them.

"Blizzardpaw is learning very well." Sandcoat meowed, taking another bite out of the gull.

Blizzardpaw just gave an enormous smile to Otterpelt.

"Great! Oh also, are you two going to the gathering Vertexclan and Driftclan are having?" Otterpelt went on.

"I didn't know there would be a gathering soon!" Blizzardpaw hopped up and looked at Sandcoat. "Are we going?"

Sandcoat was silent for a little.

"Sure." he said.

Blizzardpaw hopped around excitedly. "Yay!"

Chapter 14

Shredpaw was still hiding in the corner. He only slept for a little while before he woke up to the sun in his eyes. All that was going through his head was how Blacksting nearly drowned him multiple times and called that "training". Tears fell down his cheeks as he remembered the painful experience. *Why did Blacksting do that to me? I could have died and I would never see Dustshine again...* The poor apprentice thought and slowly got up from the corner of the Apprentices' den and then slowly padded out. It surprised him he didn't see that cat he called his father anywhere around. Eventually, he would appear out of nowhere.

Shredpaw then felt sick. He felt like he would throw up.

Maybe it was the rotten piece of prey that I ate yesterday... He thought and headed towards the medicine den. He was feeling dizzy as he got closer to it. His vision blurred, and he lost track of where to put his paw next.

"Shredpaw, are you alright?" The apprentice heard a meow that only echoed in his ears. He couldn't tell who's meow it was.

Why do I feel like this...? Shredpaw thought and then fell onto his side, blacking out.

*

"Are you sure he's alright?"

"I-I think he's waking up now!"

Shredpaw slowly opened his eyes. He recognized the voices of the medicine cat, Nova, and his mother, Dustshine.

"N-Nova? Dustshine?" He questioned as he sat up a little in the nest he was in.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're okay!" Dustshine nuzzled up against her kit,

tears nearly coming out of her eyes.

"What happened?" Shredpaw asked, then nuzzled with his mother, too.

"Well, Dustshine found you close to my den passed out." Nova replied, while examining Shredpaw.

"I-I just felt a little sick, that's all..." Shredpaw mewed, looking away from both Dustshine and Nova.

Nova nudged Dustshine away from Shredpaw for a bit. "Does this have anything to do with Blacksting? You can tell me Shredpaw." she urged for Shredpaw to tell her something.

Shredpaw didn't respond.

"Why would Blacksting have anything to do with this?" Dustshine meowed. "He would never hurt our kit!" she exclaimed.

"He caused him to feel sick!" Nova meowed back, anger rising in her.

"I-I'm fine..." Shredpaw tried to speak up a bit.

There was another cat who stepped into the medicine den: It was Blacksting.

Shredpaw looked away once again, and Nova and Dustshine looked at the tom.

"I'll be taking my apprentice now. He needs to continue his training." he meowed.

"I think he should stay here-"

Blacksting hissed at Nova, "*I'm* his mentor, and *I* say he's fine. Come on Shredpaw, we're going now." he flicked his tail and Shredpaw got up quickly, not minding his lightheadedness.

"You can't do that! *I'm* the medicine cat and *I* say he should stay here until he feels better!" She hissed back at him, unsheathing her

claws again.

Blacksting went over to Nova and pushed her back a little. "Don't forget who you're talking to, you *Galaxyclan* cat!" His words made Nova freeze up.

"Let's go, Shredpaw." Blacksting left the medicine den with Shredpaw behind him.

Nova glared at Dustshine. "And you're just okay with this?!"

Dustshine didn't respond and left the medicine den.

"Ugh!" Nova clawed at the ground, leaving marks on it.

*

Blacksting and Shredpaw were back at the Ocean Side. Shredpaw was shaking most of the time they were heading here. He didn't want to "swim" again. The two toms were just sitting on the sand for a while before Blacksting finally said something, "Sit right here," He meowed and went close to the water again, but not too close and used his forepaws to dig up some sand and push it behind him.

Shredpaw could only wonder what his father was planning.

Blacksting had finished digging up the sand. What he left was a hole that was deep.

"Come here and look inside." He stepped away from the hole a bit.

"Uh... O-Okay.." Shredpaw went towards it and looked in it, fearing that something would jump out at him.

Blacksting unsheathed his claws and cut into Shredpaw's back right leg. Shredpaw screeched in pain and nearly fell into the hole. Until Blacksting knocked his son into the hole, he dug himself.

Shredpaw was just writhing in the hole, his back leg bleeding out slowly.

Blacksting quickly pushed the sand he dug up back with his paws.

The sand was heavy overall because of the water soaking into it.

Blacksting kept the sand nice and flat over Shredpaw when he finished, so he sat and waited.

I can't move! And I'm losing air in here! Shredpaw thought as he attempted to open his eyes, but couldn't. Shredpaw tried to move, but he couldn't do that either. He was starting to not be able to breathe, just like when he was getting drowned by Blacksting.

Blacksting waited a little longer before he dug up poor Shredpaw. Once he did, Shredpaw took a gasp of air and cried. His tears were hitting and drying up into the sand.

"Blacksting! Wh-why are you doing this to me!?" the apprentice exclaimed as he continued crying.

Blacksting gave him a dark stare. "If you continue to question me, I will kill Dustshine, you hear? You're as worthless as Dustshine herself. Now get back in the hole, we'll be doing this for a while." He snarled at Shredpaw.

Shredpaw sobbed silently.

*

Shredpaw was sitting in the corner of the Apprentices' den again. Nova wrapped up his hind leg with cobwebs to stop the bleeding from it. While she did it, she held herself back from attacking Blacksting as he left the medicine den without care.

Shredpaw wasn't crying at all, he just had his head under his paws and was looking towards the corner.

He then heard pawsteps coming into the den. "There will be a gathering tomorrow. We're going." It was the meow of Blacksting.

Shredpaw heard his pawsteps go away when he didn't respond to him.

Everything will be fine, my friend! The voice Shredpaw heard before came back.

Chapter 15

The gathering was today, and it worried Shellstar. The Driftclan leader hasn't spoken to the Vertexclan leader Birdstar in a very long while. Shellstar knows Birdstar is always trying to improve his clan and stronger than him, but Shellstar doesn't mind it at all. He only worries because there have been scents of Vertexclan cats around the Driftclan territory, especially Birdstar's scent.

"Hey, Shellstar, can I come in?" Featherdrip, the Driftclan deputy, peeked her head in.

"Sure."

Featherdrip padded in. "I'm here to speak to you about Birdstar." she meowed.

"What about him?"

"I'm worried about how our clan will interact with his." she said and lashed her tail.

"I'm sure everything will be fine. Don't be so worrisome, Featherdrip." he meowed back and smiled.

"Okay, I guess... Well, I'll start getting our clan together." Featherdrip mewed to her leader.

"Sounds good." Shellstar replied, and Featherdrip left his den.

A few heartbeats later, Shellstar got up himself and padded out of his den. He watched as Featherdrip went around the camp and asked every cat if they were going or not. From what it looked like so far, every cat *was* going. Because of both clans not having a gathering for so many moons. All of Driftclan were close to the entrance, ready to go when their leader is. So Shellstar padded on over to the group of cats and went in front of the crowd.

"My fellow clanmates, we haven't had a gathering in a very long time. This will be a first for some of you, but for others, a second time. So be good during it and keep in mind that Vertexclan has a few members," He meowed to his clan.

Driftclan rejoiced in happiness.

"Let's get going then," Shellstar said and headed out with his clan right behind him.

*

Birdstar's only concerns right now were about the gathering and his goatweed farm. The Vertexclan leader doesn't know what has him so hooked on the plant, but every time he eats it, he feels so much better about everything. Birdstar grabbed some goatweed from behind his tail with his maw and ate it.

I already feel great! He thought, then purred to himself. Birdstar wasn't worried about getting the clan ready for the gathering, because he knew Skybelly was already doing it.

Because Skybelly is just persistent like that.

Birdstar waited for a little while before he got up and padded out of his den. He saw his clan gathered at the entrance. Skybelly was looking straight at him with a smile.

Guess every cat is ready then. He padded over to his clanmates and stood in front of them.

"Vertexclan. It has been many moons since the last gathering, let's not let Driftclan frighten us in any way!" The leader yelled.

The clan cheered. Besides Shredpaw, Blacksting, Dustshine, and Nova.

"Let's go." Birdstar meowed then flicked his tail, signaling for his clan to follow him, which they did as he padded away from Vertexclan territory.

*

Driftclan was the first to arrive at where the gathering held a place at. Shellstar and Birdstar agreed that the gathering would be at the giant flat stone near the Ocean Side. Shellstar hopped onto the stone and sat there in front of his clan, then Featherdrip sat on the side of the stone.

"There they are!" A cat from Driftclan yelled from the crowd. There on the side, padding down the sand, was Birdstar, along with the rest of Vertexclan. The clan that lived on a tiny hill-mountain finally arrived at the Ocean Side.

Birdstar hopped on the flat stone and sat next to Shellstar, Skybelly sat on that side of Birdstar. Then the rest of Vertexclan sat next to Driftclan.

Both leaders were quiet for a second before one of them finally spoke up. It was Birdstar.

"Well, Vertexclan has been doing well in terms of prey and members. We also have a new apprentice, Shredpaw, with his mentor Blacksting." Birdstar yowled.

"Shredpaw! Shredpaw! Shredpaw!", Both clans cheered.

Shredpaw was looking down at his paws, Blizzardpaw was trying to look for this Shredpaw.

"Psst, Sandcoat. Where's *Shredpaw* at?" She whispered to her mentor.

He pointed his tail over to the black tom with his head down. "I'm sure that's him right there. You plan on sharing tongues with him?" He whispered back.

"Yeah!" she replied with an enormous smile.

Shellstar cleared his throat. "Driftclan has also been doing well. Our prey is running well and we have a new warrior, apprentice, and a new mother of three kits," He mewed.

Birdstar mumbled something to himself once he heard Shellstar meow about new kits.

"Driftclan's new warrior and apprentice are Gullstalk and Blizzardpaw!" Shellstar yowled to both clans.

"Gullstalk! Blizzardpaw! Gullstalk Blizzardpaw!" the clans cheered their names. Blizzardpaw puffed out her chest in pride.

"Anything else?" Birdstar asked Shellstar.

"Nope."

"Then you all may share tongues!" Birdstar yelled.

Both clans were hesitant in conversing with each other for a few heartbeats, but then a couple of cats sat with each other and then both clans mixed as they continued to find a cat to meow at.

*

Blizzardpaw watched as both clans went into distinct groups of cats. She saw Sandcoat meowing with Hailpad and Icejaw. Then she spotted Sagethorn chatting with a grey-furred she-cat with a white ear.

I wonder where that Shredpaw cat is? Blizzardpaw thought and continued to look around for the black tom. She then saw him sitting far away from the gathering.

There he is! Better go say hi! She trotted over to Shredpaw.

As Blizzardpaw got closer, Shredpaw lifted his head and noticed her padding towards him. He put his head back down, not wanting to speak at all. The fluffy apprentice came up to him. "Hi!" She mewed and smiled.

Shredpaw didn't answer and kept his head down.

It confused Blizzardpaw, "Hello?" She waved her tail in front of his eyes.

Shredpaw looked up, "What do you want from me...?" his mew was slightly deeper than usual.

"I just want to say Hi!" Blizzardpaw continued smiling at him.

"Why did you want to say hi to me? I'm not interested," he replied.

"Well, I don't know that!"

He sighed, "Leave me alone, please."

"Nope!"

"Why?"

"I just want to know more about you!"

"You want to know more about me?"

"Yeah!"

"Okay, well, you can start by *leaving me alone*," Shredpaw nearly hissed and looked down at his paws again.

"No! I want to share tongues with you!" Blizzardpaw exclaimed.

Shredpaw looked up with a grim look on his face. "What's the point? What will you do with that information once I give it to you? We're here wasting our lives away and you want to, "share tongues with me"? Why don't you go get to know a cat who's life matters and let me be by myself?" He snarled and looked right back down at his paws.

Blizzardpaw stood in silence and surprise at what Shredpaw had told her.

She then went back towards the giant groups of cats. Blizzardpaw looked back at Shredpaw once more before she started heading for the group Icejaw was in.

Well, that wasn't nice.

*

Nova and Otterpelt were in their own little two she-cat group with each other sharing tongues.

"So anything on the prophecy yet?" Nova meowed.

"I have had no *visions*, but I thought about one thing."

"And what's that?" Nova stopped licking for a second.

"Thorntail said something about a blizzard, and maybe it has something to do with Blizzardpaw, the apprentice in my clan," Otterpelt replied.

"Well, that's a brilliant start! You should ask her if she's had any dreams about anything when you get back to your territory," Nova suggested.

"Sounds like a plan."

*

"And the shark never came back!" Eelspeck meowed and puffed his chest out proudly.

"Now, *that* never happened. You thought *a fish* was a piranha," Sandcoat sighed.

The she-cats that the two toms were with were Scorchwatcher, Crownight, and Cloudthorn, who all giggled at Eelspeck.

"Aw, come on Sandcoat! You could've backed me up on that!" He lowered his ears.

Sandcoat just sighed.

*

"Oh, look, they will share tongues!" Sagethorn meowed to Dustshine in awe as both mothers watched their she-cats interact.

The two saw what looked like Shredpaw getting angry.

"Oh dear, that didn't look like it went well," Dustshine mewed as they watched Blizzardpaw pad away.

"I'm sure he didn't mean whatever he said... I hope..." Sagethorn

replied.

Dustshine frowned, "Yeah, I hope so too..."

*

Shellstar saw as the sun was setting, "I think it's time," He mewed to Birdstar, who nodded then sat up.

"Cats of Vertexclan and Driftclan! The gathering is now over!" He yowled.

There were few groans of disappointment, but every cat prepared to go back to their territories. Both Shellstar and Birdstar hopped off of the flat stone and met with their respective clans.

Cats of both clans said their goodbyes, and both headed back off to where they came from. Blizzardpaw was padding by Sandcoat as they were heading back.

"So did you speak with Shredpaw?" He asked.

"Uh, yeah! He was a little mean, though..." Blizzardpaw's ears flattened slightly.

"Why do you say that?"

"He just didn't want to share tongues with me and yelled at me about it?" She replayed what Shredpaw had said in her head.

"Well, that's okay, Blizzardpaw. He was probably just nervous. It was his first gathering, too. You never know." Sandcoat shrugged.

"I guess you're right." Blizzardpaw replied.

But if he was nervous, why would he say all that stuff about us not living long to me?

Chapter 16

"Blizzardpaw, wake up! Please don't die on me!" The meow echoed.

Blizzardpaw jolted awake and looked around. She just woke up from a nightmare. *I'm so glad that it wasn't real... I would never die!* She thought, then sat up in her nest. She and Sandcoat will pick up on their training today because of them going to the gathering yesterday. Blizzardpaw decided she would meditate before she went outside into the den. Her meditation got interrupted shortly after she started by a yell coming from outside.

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" It was Shellstar.

I can only wonder what Shellstar wants. She thought and padded outside to see other clanmates already at the Tide Pool. Blizzardpaw padded up next to Sandcoat. He looked at her and smiled.

"I've gathered you all here today because there will be three new apprentices," Shellstar meowed to his clanmates.

He must mean Dampkit, Eaglekit, and Thistlekit! Blizzardkit thought and purred.

"Dampkit, Eaglekit, and Thistlekit, please step forward."

They all did as they were told and stepped up to the Tide Pool.

Shellstar looked at Dampkit first. "Dampkit, from this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Damppaw. Your mentor will be Rushstreak." Rushstreak came up next to Damppaw.

Next Shellstar looked at Eaglekit. "Eaglekit, from this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Eaglepaw. Your mentor will be Icejaw." Icejaw came up next to Eaglepaw. Blizzardpaw smiled widely at her father for being a mentor.

Last, Shellstar looked at Thistlekit, and she didn't look so happy about becoming a warrior. "Thistlekit, from this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Thistlepaw. Your mentor will be Stormfish." Stormfish quietly sighed and came up next to Thistlepaw.

Shellstar looked at all three mentors, "Rushstreak, Icejaw, Stormfish, your past mentors have given you great training. I expect you all to pass down what you know to your apprentice." He meowed.

The three mentors dipped their heads to Shellstar.

"You all may dip your noses in the Tide Pool."

The six cats in front of the Tide Pool dipped their noses in and took them out.

"Damppaw! Eaglepaw! Thistlepaw!" Driftclan cheered.

Every cat went back to their normal activities. Blizzardpaw bounded up to Damppaw. Damppaw instantly noticed and blushed, "H-Hi Blizzardpaw." He mewed.

"Hi, Damppaw! Congratulations on becoming an apprentice!" She nuzzled up against him.

"Thanks!!" Damppaw was blushing even more now that Blizzardpaw was closer to him.

"It'll be fun! And think about it, we'll both be warriors one day!" Blizzardpaw exclaimed.

"Y-Yeah! Being warriors will be great!" He mewed back, thinking about being a warrior with Blizzardpaw, blushing even *more* now.

Sandcoat then yelled from the back of the camp, "Hey, Blizzardpaw! We will continue training now! Come on!" He called.

"Well, it looks like I have to go now! Bye, Damppaw!" She mewed and licked his cheek before she ran off to Sandcoat. The lick caused him to freeze up his fur, feeling hot.

"B-bye!" Damppaw barely got the word out of his maw.

*

Sandcoat and Blizzardpaw were back behind Driftclan again.

"We will fight today." Sandcoat meowed.

Blizzardpaw gasped. "Really? Yay!" Her ears flattened. "But what if I hurt you with my claws?"

"You won't have to use your claws. Don't kill your opponent, just try to batter them and take them down, understood?"

Blizzardpaw nodded.

"We'll start with pouncing and swatting. Like you would do to prey," Sandcoat said.

"Alright!" She charged at Sandcoat and attempted to pounce on him, but he only moved back a slight bit and it didn't move him much at all.

"Aw! I thought that would work!"

"You need to put more force into your forepaws when you try to pounce on me. Do you notice how my forepaws are always on you when I surprise attack you?"

"No, not really!"

Sandcoat sighed. "Well, just put more into your forepaws and try again."

Blizzardpaw stepped back and took a couple of breaths before running at her mentor. She reached for her forepaws and pushed into Sandcoat, knocking him down.

"There you go!" He exclaimed. "But remember to pin and batter your opponent. Try to knock them out without injuring them severely."

Blizzardpaw nodded in response, smiling at the fact that she was learning how to fight.

"You should only ever use your claws if your opponent is attempting to kill you. If your claws *are* out, you need to make sure you swat at them as much as you can. Aim for their muzzle." Sandcoat meowed and got up, licking his fur.

"Like this?" Blizzardpaw unsheathed her claws and swatted towards Sandcoat's muzzle.

"Yes, good job!" He praised.

Blizzardpaw sheathed her claws and bounced around like a kit. "Yay!"

Sandcoat chuckled. "Alright, let's practice for a little while longer and then head back."

Blizzardpaw nodded. "I'm ready!"

*

Blizzardpaw padded back into the Apprentices' den. She saw only Damppaw in his nest, and he looked up at her. "Oh, Hi Blizzardpaw!"

Blizzardpaw gave an enormous smile and sat next to Damppaw. "I forgot you, Eaglepaw, and Thistlepaw would be den mates with me now! Speaking of which, where are those two at?" She asked.

"They are still out with their mentors. Rushstreak taught me to hunt for a while and then we came back." Damppaw replied, blushing again.

"Outstanding! I hope you don't mind me sleeping next to you, though, Damppaw." Blizzardpaw licked her paw and rubbed it on her head.

"I-I don't at all!" He replied nervously, then smiled.

Blizzardpaw giggled. "I'm glad!" She laid her head on his side and

closed her eyes.

Damppaw laid his head down as well and shut his eyes.

He felt thrilled about being by Blizzardpaw.

Chapter 17

Shredpaw wanted nothing more than to be away from Blacksting again, and the gathering was his only time away from the cat he calls his father. Shredpaw didn't understand how almost killing your son twice is "training". He wondered if he will ever learn how to hunt or even fight.

Hi, friend! The voice that spoke to Shredpaw before had come back to talk to him.

Shredpaw groaned, "What do *you* want? I don't even know your name..."

Well... My name is Shred! Close to your name! The voice said.

"Shred...?" Shredpaw echoed.

Shred!

Shredpaw chose not to respond to the voice any farther until he realized the voice was in his head. He only stopped because he heard pawsteps coming into the Apprentices' den.

"Hey, Shredpaw."

Shredpaw looked up to see who it was. It was his mother, Dustshine. His expression went from blank to a frown. He stood up and gave her a dark stare. "You come in here to say Hey Shredpaw? No "Shredpaw, are you okay" or "Shredpaw I'm sorry"?" He snarled at Dustshine.

"Shredpaw I didn't-"

"No!" He hissed. "I don't want to speak with you! I've got hurt these past two moons and you just don't seem to care anymore! Leave me alone!"

"But Shredpaw-"

"Get out!" Shredpaw gave another hiss to his mother. Tears were forming in her eyes as she left the Apprentices' den with her head lowered.

As she left, another cat came in.

It was Blacksting.

He looked back at Dustshine before he looked at Shredpaw again. "You made her sad? Marvellous job, anyway. Our next lesson will begin soon. Be ready when I am you, worthless apprentice."

Blacksting left quickly.

I don't want to be alive anymore. Shredpaw thought as he slowly left the apprentices' den. He looked around and he noticed Blacksting was with two other cats. They were both toms. Shredpaw didn't want to know what Blacksting wanted to teach him at all if it involved those two toms.

The three cats looked at Shredpaw and padded over to him.

Please leave me alone... Shredpaw thought as they came up to him.

They all stopped right in front of him. "Stagwhisper and Rockcreek will help us with your training today, Shredpaw."

The two didn't look so happy doing this for Blacksting. So they both looked away from Shredpaw.

Blacksting gave a small chuckle. "Let's get going then."

The four toms headed out of camp. Nova watched silently from the Medicine den.

*

They got to a place that Shredpaw was unfamiliar with. It was a little far from Vertexclan, but not far enough to not be able to get back. They stopped by an old tree that had not a single leaf on it.

Why are we here...? Shredpaw thought and stared at the tree for a

moment before realizing there were claw marks on it.

"Shredpaw. Stagwhisper and Rockcreek will attack you. You won't fight back at all. If you do, then I will kill Dustshine, you hear?"

Shredpaw didn't respond.

"Show no mercy."

Stagwhisper and Rockcreek padded up closer to Shredpaw, and both unsheathed their claws. But they were hesitant. They didn't want to hurt the poor apprentice.

Blacksting was getting angry, so he unsheathed his claws. "It's not that hard to hurt a cat! Just do this!" He went behind Shredpaw and raked his back with both of his claws deeply, causing Shredpaw to shriek in pain.

Rockcreek and Stagwhisper watched in horror as Blacksting hurt his apprentice. Blacksting gave Shredpaw another giant rake on his back, and it caused him to shriek in pain again.

"See, that's how you do it! Now attack him before I kill Smokedream!" Blacksting snarled.

Stagwhisper held back his tears as he didn't want to do this, and Rockcreek also seemed like he would cry, but they clawed and rake at Shredpaw themselves. Shredpaw had tears falling down his face as he felt more and more pain inflict onto him. He fell onto the ground as they continued to batter all over him and rake into his fur. There was a lot of blood staining Shredpaw's fur and the paws of Stagwhisper and Rockcreek.

Shredpaw's eyes rolled to the back of his head as he passed out in front of the three cats.

Why... Me? He thought as he closed his eyes for what he thought would be the last time he saw any cat.

*

Shredpaw slowly opened his eyes, only to see Nova in front of him,

pacing around quickly. She then looked over at Shredpaw.

"Oh, thank Starclan you're okay!" She quickly went over to him to check his wounds once more.

Shredpaw looked at his body slightly, but not too much since every move he made hurt. He could see a ton of cobwebs wrapped around his body and legs. "What happened...?" He winced at the pain he felt from the slight movement.

"Blacksting said a fox attacked you. Is that true?" The medicine cat asked.

Shredpaw didn't want to respond.

"Shredpaw, if Blacksting is hurting you. Please let me know now..."

He just laid his head back down. He didn't want to think about what Blacksting would do to his mother.

"Shredpaw! I demand you tell me as your medicine cat what happened!" Nova hissed. She was well angry now.

"There was a fox that attacked us." Shredpaw lied.

Tears were welling up in her eyes. "Shredpaw, please! Is that the truth? I don't want to see a clanmate of mine get hurt like this again... You could've died..." The tears fell down her face.

Shredpaw didn't answer.

Shredpaw just wanted to be alone.

Chapter 18

Otterpelt was sorting herbs in the medicine den. The brown she-cat decided she would do this before she went to speak with Blizzardpaw. A couple of moons ago, a cat named Thorntail, an old Driftclan medicine cat that taught Otterpelt the ways of a medicine cat, had told her and Vertexclan's medicine cat, Nova, that there was a prophecy that Starclan chose not to speak of. Thorntail did what was right and told the two medicine cats, but before he could finish the prophecy, the time to speak with him was up and the two medicine cats got stuck with "The blizzard will stop the sh-" which isn't good at all.

"Well, at least we know that the prophecy might have something to do with Blizzardpaw..." Otterpelt mewed to herself as she sorted the last of the herbs that needed sorting.

Can't have a messy medicine den after all.

Once Otterpelt finished, she padded out of the den. She instantly spotted Blizzardpaw with her mentor, Sandcoat.

Looks like they are going out of camp soon. I better get to them quickly. Otterpelt thought and ran over to Blizzardpaw and Sandcoat.

Sandcoat was the first to notice her when she ran up to them, "Oh, hi Otterpelt," He meowed.

Blizzardpaw turned around next, "Hi Otterpelt!" She mewed excitedly.

"Hey! Sandcoat, can I talk to Blizzardpaw for a moment, please?" She asked nicely.

"Sure, I'll go talk to Shellstar then, once I come back we'll go Blizzardpaw."

"Okay, Sandcoat!", She replied and watched her mentor head to

Shellstar's den, then turned to Otterpelt. "So, what's up?"

"Just wanted to ask if you've had any... *Weird* dreams lately."

"Weird dreams? Like special ones?"

"Sure!"

"Hm..." Blizzardpaw thought for a second. "Well, when I was a kit, I had a strange dream. I never knew what it meant, but I figured you would! I just never got the chance to talk to you until now!" She smiled.

"Tell me about the dream," Otterpelt insisted.

"Well, this cat that had stars in their fur told me about an uh, shred that was hurting a clan, I think?" Blizzardpaw tilted her head a little.

That's it! The last part of the prophecy! "The blizzard will stop the shred"! Otterpelt thought and almost hopped around like a kit.

"We're going now!" Sandcoat yelled from across the camp near the entrance.

"I have to go with Sandcoat now! Hopefully, that helped you!" Blizzardpaw ran to her mentor.

It did Blizzardpaw. Now I have to let Nova know!

*

Blizzardpaw was a little confused. She and Sandcoat haven't been to the Ocean Side since the gathering. *I wonder what we could do now?* She thought, then happily trotted beside her mentor. They continued padding down the side until they got to a certain spot where the water got deeper as you pad on.

"What are we doing here, Sandcoat?" Blizzardpaw mewed with confusion.

"Well, I'll be teaching you how to swim and catch fish!" He

exclaimed with a smile.

Blizzardpaw hopped up and down excitedly, "Yay!"

"Swimming is serious, Blizzardpaw. Do your best to swim nice and fast." He meowed, getting ready to go into the ocean and swim.

"Okay!"

"Now watch how I do this." Sandcoat padded into the water. The sand disappeared from under his paws. Sandcoat began reaching one paw out after another and continued to swim around in a circle and then swam back to Blizzardpaw.

"Wow, that was amazing, Sandcoat!" She gasped.

Sandcoat shook his fur as the water was dripping off of it. "I want you to try, but be careful. It's all in the forepaws and it will be cold. Just don't freak out, okay?"

"I won't!" Blizzardpaw slowly headed into the water. *It's so cold!* She thought as the water came up to her legs. She looked back at her mentor, with a slight look of worry on her face.

"Like I said Blizzardpaw, just don't get scared and you'll be fine."

Blizzardpaw took a deep breath in and then out, then continued to head into the water. The fluffy apprentice noticed her paws couldn't feel the ground anymore.

"There you go! Now just use your paws to swim in a circle and back to me." Sandcoat instructed.

Blizzardpaw nodded and pulled the water towards her with her forepaws, and she moved forward. Once she felt like it, she turned around as Sandcoat did. Blizzardpaw saw Sandcoat smiling as she swam back to him. Once she got back on shore, she shook her fur out vigorously. "The water is super cold!" Blizzardpaw shivered.

"It might be, but you did an amazing job! I didn't think you could get it first, try!" Sandcoat purred at the progress his apprentice has made.

"I can swim!" Blizzardpaw hopped up and down again.

"Yes, you can! Now, we will practice this a little more and then head back to camp." Sandcoat meowed to her.

"What about fishing?" The white she-cat questioned.

"Once we go over things tomorrow before your assessment, I'll teach you how to fish."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Chapter 19

Blacksting knew what he wanted in his life. He thought it over for a couple of moons, but he wanted to be the new leader of Vertexclan. He knew it wouldn't be easy getting to that point, but he had a plan in his mind. After he trained an apprentice, he will kill the deputy of Vertexclan Skybelly. He planned to have Skybelly get injured badly and then feed him death berries. He didn't know how he would injure such a careful tom like Skybelly. Skybelly would probably find out what he was planning in an instant!

Which is why I have to finish training that worthless Shredpaw before I plan. He thought as he watched Skybelly head into Birdstar's den.

Where is he, anyway? He looked around and saw Nova coming out of the medicine den, so he quickly headed over to her. Nova nearly growled when he came up to her. "Do you *need* something, Blacksting?" She said through bared teeth.

"Where is Shredpaw?"

"Why do you need to know?" She snapped back.

"He's my apprentice. I should be able to know where he is," Blacksting meowed.

"Well, maybe you don't need to know!" tears were welling up in her eyes at the thought of the poor injured Shredpaw.

"Is he in the medicine den?"

"Listen." Nova started and hissed. "He is, but if I ever find out you were the one that hurt Shredpaw like this, I'll make sure you get *exiled* Blacksting." she snarled at him.

"Good luck trying. Our leader cares more about his *goatweed* than his *clan*," Blacksting chuckled softly, then headed to the medicine den.

I can't let this go on... Nova thought as she headed to Birdstar's den.

*

Shredpaw still didn't want to be alive anymore. He wondered when his time would come for him to die. The black tom only laid there in a nest in the medicine den, with only himself and his thoughts since Nova left for a little while. Shredpaw could move now, but there was pain he could feel all over his body when he did.

Shredpaw heard pawsteps come into the medicine den. He looked up to see none other than Blacksting himself.

"Did you tell Nova anything?" He asked.

Shredpaw shook his head.

"Good, now get up. I'm taking you back to the apprentices' den," Blacksting meowed.

"But what about Nova-"

"Who *cares* what she says. If she gets in my way, I'll just kill her, now get up."

Shredpaw got up and winced at the instantaneous pain that jolted in his body. He prevented himself from yowling in pain at every paw step he took. Blacksting left the medicine den with Shredpaw behind him. Blacksting was mumbling something to himself as they both went into the apprentices' den.

"Go sit in the corner," He ordered.

Shredpaw did what he was told and sat in the corner.

"You will learn how to go without food," Blacksting meowed.

Shredpaw would react to that, but he only sighed. He didn't care if he died or not.

"Don't you leave this den until I say you can." He hissed and left

right after that.

Shredpaw sat there in silence. He just wanted to see Dustshine once more.

*

Nova had stormed to Birdstar's den. She has had enough of her leader not doing anything to help Shredpaw. She padded in without asking if she could. Birdstar was just lying there in his nest before he looked up at her. "Hello, Nova. Do you need anything?" he mewed.

"I want you to do something about Blacksting!" she demanded.

"Do what about him?"

Nova got angrier by the second. "He's hurting Shredpaw and you're doing nothing about it!"

"Blacksting said a fox hurt him, he wouldn't be able to hurt Shredpaw that badly." Birdstar shrugged.

"And you're just going to believe that?"

"Stagwhisper and Rockcreek told me it was true. So, what's the problem here?"

Nova growled. "The *problem* is that you see nothing wrong and you would rather eat *goatweed* than care about it!" She hissed.

Birdstar got up with an expression of anger on his face. "That's because nothing is wrong, Nova. If it was Blacksting who attacked Shredpaw and the fox was a lie, Rockcreek or Stagwhisper would have told me already!" He yelled.

Nova went silent.

"Now I will have to ask you to leave my den, please."

Nova turned around and was at the entrance of the den. "If you see nothing wrong, then that's fine. I'll leave you to your goatweed and

figure this out myself." She said before she left Birdstar's den, not looking back at all.

She decided she was going out of camp for a little while.

*

Shredpaw knew he was hungry, but he didn't want to acknowledge it at all. Every time he thought about eating prey, his stomach grumbled, which made his stomach hurt more than before.

What if I just died here... Who would care? Shredpaw laid his head down and tried to sleep.

He then heard pawsteps come into the den, he looked up to see:

Dustshine.

He got up shakily and saw that she had a delicate piece of prey in her jaws. She padded up to him and placed it in front of him. Shredpaw felt tears fall down his cheeks. Why would his mother do this for him? She doesn't know that Blacksting could hurt her.

The last thing I want is for Dustshine to get hurt... Shredpaw thought and sobbed.

"Please eat it." She held back her tears. "Blacksting told me what he was doing and I will not let my son starve to death..."

"Why are you being so nice to me? I yelled at you and said some mean things..." He continued to cry.

"It's alright," she brought him close to her. "I should have thought about how you felt and who your mentor is. I was so blinded by loving Blacksting I've lost the love I had with my kit." she couldn't hold back her tears anymore.

"You haven't... I will love you forever, Dustshine..." Shredpaw nuzzled up against his mother, and she nuzzled back.

"Now please eat up."

Shredpaw nodded happily and took a bite out of the juicy piece of prey in front of him.

Chapter 20

Blizzardpaw knew that tomorrow she would have her warrior assessment. She wanted to make sure that everything she did was perfect or near perfect. Blizzardpaw hasn't spoken to Icejaw in a while. She wondered if she could talk to him today. She would get up and stretch, but she noticed Damppaw was snoring softly.

He looks so nice and peaceful... She thought and smiled.

Eaglepaw noticed Blizzardpaw staring at his brother and padded up to her. "Hey, Blizzardpaw! Why are you staring at Damppaw like that?" His head tilted to the side, a little in confusion.

Blizzardpaw noticed Eaglepaw standing beside her, and she shook her head. "U-Uh, no reason!" She looked away quickly and blushed.

"Alright, I guess..." Eaglepaw padded out of the Apprentices' den afterward.

Blizzardpaw quickly got up and stretched. She would leave the den as well. Then Damppaw opened his eyes. "Hi, Blizzardpaw!" He blinked a few times, then smiled at her.

She nearly jumped when he called her name. "Hello, Damppaw!" She meowed.

"How's the training going?" he asked, now getting up and stretching.

"It's going well, I'm just going to be training more today before my assessment tomorrow." she smiled and the thought of being a warrior of Driftclan.

"Really?" He gasped. "You've been an apprentice for that long already?"

"Yeah! Do you want to help me practice?"

Damppaw blushed, "S-Sure! We must ask our mentors first though,"

He added.

"Okay! I'll go find Sandcoat then," Blizzardpaw meowed and headed out of the apprentices' den, now looking for her mentor. As she did, she saw Icejaw and Sagethorn talking to each other, so she padded up to the two. "Hi, Sagethorn! Hi, Icejaw!" She mewed as she happily swayed her tail.

"Hi!" Sagethorn meowed.

"Hey, Blizzardpaw. Sandcoat told us you'll be having your assessment soon. We're both very excited for you." Icejaw gave a smile.

Sagethorn nodded in agreement.

"Are you proud of me, Icejaw?" Blizzardpaw asked eagerly.

"I am! You've come such a long way and you're almost a warrior! I couldn't be any more proud of my kit than I am now!" He purred happily.

Blizzardpaw gave a wide smile and nuzzled up against her father, doing her best to hold back her tears at Icejaw's words. Sagethorn huddled with both of them, "And we both love you very much." she purred.

Blizzardpaw purred. "I love you both too!" She would go back to the apprentices' den, but she remembered what she came to ask them. "Have you seen Sandcoat anywhere?" She looked up at them.

"I'm sure he's in the Warriors' den if you're looking for him," Sagethorn meowed.

"I am, thank you!" Blizzardpaw ran off to the Warriors' den.

Once Blizzardpaw got there, she peeked her head in to see Sandcoat and Rushstreak lying next to each other. Rushstreak was still sleeping, and Sandcoat lifted his head to see Blizzardpaw. "Oh hey Blizzardpaw," He meowed, "I'll be up soon so we can go over everything I've taught you," He yawned and Rushstreak shifted closer to Sandcoat.

"I wanted to know if Damppaw and his mentor could train with us?" She asked.

"Well, maybe they can join us in fighting, but the other things will just have to be us. Since they are not learning everything we have learned right now."

"Aw, okay. I'll let Damppaw know!" Blizzardpaw padded out of the Warriors' den and headed back to the Apprentices' den.

Sandcoat looked over at Rushstreak and then looked down at her slightly rounded belly.

I don't know how long she'll be training him though... He thought and sighed.

*

A while later, Sandcoat and Blizzardpaw were behind Driftclan territory again. They had meditated, hunted, swam and now they were on to fighting again, but this time they were with Rushstreak and Damppaw. Blizzardpaw and Damppaw stood in front of each other, ready to start.

"Now Blizzardpaw remember, Damppaw has practiced little so take it easy on him," Rushstreak meowed and licked her fur.

"Okay!"

"I'll be fine Rushstreak don't worry-"

Blizzardpaw tackled Damppaw before he could finish, instantly pinning him to the ground. "H-Hey!" The small version of Lionsplash mewed and blushed. He tried to shake her off, but he couldn't.

"You said you would be fine!" Blizzardpaw exclaimed and got off of Damppaw.

"Alright alright, how about you let Damppaw tackle you and you shake him off?" Sandcoat meowed.

"Sure!" She watched as Damppaw got up and got ready to tackle her.

Damppaw ran towards Blizzardpaw, and she allowed him to pounce on her. He forgot to pin her, though, so she easily pushed him off and pounced on him, pinning him.

Rushstreak sighed, and Sandcoat chuckled.

"You're good at this!" Damppaw blushed again.

"Thanks!" She licked his nose and giggled, then got up off him. The lick on the nose caused him to freeze up on the ground.

"I think that's enough of that for now. Rushstreak and Damppaw will continue on their training. Blizzardpaw let's go fishing." Sandcoat meowed.

"Yay!" she said excitedly, then hopped around.

"I'll talk to you later." Sandcoat licked Rushstreak's cheek, then headed in a different direction, away from the two other cats with Blizzardpaw.

"Hey! Get up, please!" Rushstreak prodded her apprentice.

*

Blizzardpaw was back in camp now, in the apprentices' den. She and Sandcoat had to go to a small stream to catch some fish, since catching fish in the ocean was tougher to do. Blizzardpaw sat in her nest and yawned. She just wanted to get her assessment over with and doing some Warrior duties. She heard pawsteps come into the den. It was Damppaw. He looked tired.

He laid himself out next to Blizzardpaw, who giggled. "You alright, Damppaw?" she mewed.

"Yeah... I'm just tired of today's training..." He laid his head down.

"Oh..." She was quiet for a second before asking something else. "Do you think I'll do well on my assessment?"

Damppaw almost gasped. "Of course you will! You're like the best at everything!" he mewed.

Blizzardpaw smiled, "Thanks!"

I just need to stay positive, and everything will be fine! Hopefully... She thought, then laid her head on her paws.

Chapter 21

Shredpaw hasn't felt happy in a while, because of his father torturing him and his mother not being around him a lot. When Dustshine gave him that piece of prey, he's never felt so relieved and happy to see her in a long while. He only hoped that Blacksting left him alone today because he didn't want to know how they were going to "train" today. Shredpaw got the courage to get up out of his nest and leave the apprentices' den instead of Blacksting making him leave. Shredpaw had a slight limp on his back right leg now, but he didn't care. All he cared about was being happy now. When he padded out of the den, the first cat he saw was Crownight. She quickly came up to him with a smile. "Hi, Shredpaw! You doing alright?" She asked.

"Hello, Crownight. I'm fine, how about you?" He replied.

"I'm great, thanks for asking!" Crownight happily trotted over to her sister Scorchwatcher to talk to her. Shredpaw had gotten to know his other clanmates because he felt it was wrong for him not to talk to them. He decided he would go to the Elders' den next. As he continued his way to see the elders, he saw Blacksting quickly look around and head into the Warriors' den.

It would be best for me not to worry about him right now... Shredpaw thought, then peeked his head into the Elders' den to see Greenscar and Sunnyjaw chatting.

"I kit three she-cats and none of them have mates!" Greenscar meowed and sighed.

"I'm sure they will have mates at some point. Maybe Buzzardgaze's sons will become mates with two of your daughters. You never know!" Sunnyjaw replied, licking his paw and then rubbing it on his head.

"That still leaves one without a mate!" Greenscar put her head in between her paws and gave another enormous sigh.

"Hello." Shredpaw mewed and padded inside.

The two elders looked up at Shredpaw. "Hi there, young one!" Sunnyjaw smiled. Greenscar grunted and put her head back down.

"Don't mind her, she's just grumpy." Sunnyjaw added.

"I am not!" Greenscar said.

Shredpaw giggled a little at the tiny quarrel.

"So what're you in here for? Our pelts are clean," Greenscar meowed.

"I just wanted to check on you two and say hello!" Shredpaw smiled, though the smile hurt a bit.

"Oh, well, thank you! We're fine! It was Shredpaw, wasn't it?" the old tom meowed.

"Yes, it is!"

"Well, good to see the young cats are still checking on us." Greenscar coughed a bit and then yawned.

"All three of your daughters came to see you yesterday!" Sunnyjaw exclaimed.

"Well, it felt like it was moons ago!" She turned away slightly with a huff.

Shredpaw giggled again. "Well, I'll be going now!" Shredpaw meowed.

"Goodbye, Shredpaw. Visit again soon!" Sunnyjaw meowed back, smiling. Greenscar just gave another huff as Shredpaw left the Elders' den.

"You've been more grumpy than usual, Greenscar, what's the problem?" the tom looked at her.

"I just have a bad feeling about something, but I just can't lay my

paw on it..." she replied, and gave an enormous yawn.

"And I'm not grumpy!" She added.

*

Once Shredpaw was out of the Elders' den, he saw Blacksting and Dustshine talking to each other about something. They both saw Shredpaw and headed over to him.

I don't even want to think about what Blacksting wants to do... Shredpaw thought, but he would stay happy and positive, anyway. Once they got up to him, Blacksting had a smirk on his face. "Dustshine will help us with your next lesson, Shredpaw," He meowed.

Shredpaw gave her a worried look. "Don't worry, it will be fine, I promise," she said and nuzzled him.

I hope you're right... Shredpaw thought.

Blacksting signaled for them to follow him out of the camp, so they did.

*

Shredpaw instantly recognized the nearly dead tree he got beat up by and got worried. Blacksting turned around and looked at both of them.

"Shredpaw, this lesson is learning how to deal with the loss of a loved one." He mewed.

Dustshine gave a confused look. "That's not what you told me..."

"I have lost no cat though-" Shredpaw stopped once he saw Blacksting tackle Dustshine and dig his claws into her shoulders and she shrieked in pain.

No... Shredpaw thought as he would try to get Blacksting off of her, but Dustshine got some words out, "N-No... Shredpaw stay back!"

"I've had enough of you." Blacksting bit into her right shoulder and she yowled in pain, more blood leaking out of it.

"No, stop!" Shredpaw ran up and push Blacksting off his mother.

Blacksting growled and clawed Shredpaw on the eye, causing some blood to spurt out and Shredpaw yelling in pain and nearly dropped onto the ground, blood leaking from his left eye.

"Stay out of this!" Blacksting hissed.

Dustshine was trying to get up, but Blacksting got back up and clawed and rake into her chest and all over her muzzle. More blood was being spilled onto the ground.

Shredpaw turned around and saw as his mother was being torn into. *N-No!* His limp was preventing him from going any faster.

Dustshine coughed up some blood. "Blacksting... You don't have to do this..." she coughed again.

Blacksting didn't answer and bit into Dustshine's neck as hard as he could, causing blood to fill up in her mouth.

Shredpaw stopped in his tracks. *He didn't...*

Blacksting got off of the now non-moving Dustshine. A pool of blood was leaking out of her mouth.

"Dustshine!!" Shredpaw yelled as loud as possible and ran over to his mother with tears streaming down his eyes, blood still leaking from his right one.

"Shredpaw, we don't all stay alive forever. Even our loved ones." Blacksting said darkly.

Shredpaw glared at the cat who had killed his mother. "Why did you kill her?! She's the only cat I truly cared about!"

Blacksting didn't answer.

Shredpaw cried and wailed for his mother to get up.

"Make sure you come back to camp." Blacksting meowed and headed back without a care.

"*Dustshine, please wake up*!"

Chapter 22

The sun was high and bright in the sky as the sunlight that came from it shot into the Apprentices' den. Blizzardpaw was snoring softly until she felt the warm light on her muzzle. She woke up and groaned, "I don't want to get up..." She meowed. Blizzardpaw then realized that she would have her warrior assessment today, so she hopped up excitedly. Damppaw felt her move. He looked up at her and yawned. "Blizzardpaw? Why did you get up like that?" He asked.

"My warrior assessment is today!" She exclaimed. "Oh no, my warrior assessment is today!" Blizzardpaw repeated, then sat back down with her ears lowered.

Damppaw licked her cheek. "There's nothing to worry about, Blizzardpaw. You will be fine! Just know that your clan believes in you." He encouraged her.

"Aw, Damppaw, you're so nice!" She purred and licked his cheek back. Damppaw almost froze up again, but he just blushed.

Blizzardpaw got back up and stretched. "Well, I will go get a piece of prey from the fresh-kill pile. See you around, Damppaw!" She licked his nose and left the apprentices' den.

"You two like each other, huh?" Thistlepaw nudged her brother.

"N-No!" He looked away, his fur getting hot now.

Thistlepaw giggled, "Sure!"

*

After Blizzardpaw ate a nice gull from the fresh-kill pile, she looked around for Sandcoat. He wasn't anywhere to be found, but there was a different cat who came up to her. It was Gullstalk.

"Hi, Blizzardpaw!" He meowed happily to her.

She hopped up excitedly. "Gullstalk!" She nuzzled up against him.

"I heard your assessment is today. Just wanted to wish you good luck!" Gullstalk said, putting a tail on her shoulder.

"Thanks! But I am a little worried that it'll be hard..." She looked down at her paws.

"Don't worry about it, just do your best to remember everything your mentor taught you and do it well!" Gullstalk said and purred.

Blizzardpaw looked at him with a glimmer of hope in her eyes. "You think I can do it?"

"I *know* you can do it, Blizzardpaw." He replied and nuzzled her.

Just then, there was another cat that came up to the two. It was Sandcoat. He padded up with a smile on his face. "Blizzardpaw, are you ready to do your warrior assessment?" He asked.

The fluffy apprentice took a deep breath in and out. "I am!" she replied, her tail lashing.

"Alright, good. Come with me and I'll tell Shellstar, then we'll go start." Sandcoat meowed.

"Good luck, Blizzardpaw!" Gullstalk called as the two cats headed to Shellstar's den.

"Thanks!" she called back.

*

Sandcoat and Blizzardpaw were behind the camp again, the first place where her first lesson was. "I want you to catch a piece of prey and bring it back to me," Sandcoat ordered.

"Alright!" she replied, then padded off in a different direction.

Blizzardpaw stopped. She heard something rustle in the bushes; she sniffed the air. *That is the scent of prey, for sure!* She thought as she closed her eyes and calmly got herself into a hunters' crouch.

Blizzardpaw was looking towards the bush when she did so.

She was still silent for a few heartbeats, sniffing the air to make sure the prey was still there and it was. Blizzardpaw lept into the bush as quickly as she could and felt something warm under her paws. She used her claws on one paw to cut into its throat and the other to hold the prey down while doing so.

"Yes! I did it!" She exclaimed and picked the piece of prey to, then headed back to Sandcoat.

Sandcoat saw his apprentice run back with the prey in her jaws. When she came up to him, she dropped it in front of him. "Outstanding job!" He meowed with excitement. Blizzardpaw gave a wide smile.

"Next, you will track my scent. I won't go far this time. Close your eyes for me, please." her mentor said.

"Okay!" She did as she was told and closed her eyes. Blizzardpaw heard pawsteps go away from her for a moment. A few heartbeats later she opened her eyes to see Sandcoat gone, but she caught his scent pretty quickly. She padded in the direction he was in, which was straightforward.

She came to a point where his scent was strong on her left side, but it continued to go straight forward. Blizzardpaw closed her eyes and sniffed the air again. *He said he wouldn't go far, so he has to be trying to trick me!* She thought and pounced into the shrub next to her, then she opened her eyes to see Sandcoat under her. "Hello, Blizzardpaw. Pleasant job!" He meowed.

"How am I doing so far?" She meowed back and got up off of him, and he got up.

"You're doing amazing!" He exclaimed, "But there's one more thing you have to do."

"What is it?" She asked.

"Well, swimming!" Sandcoat replied, "Let's get that piece of prey you caught and take it back to the camp. Then we can finish this all

up with swimming," He added.

"Okay!" Blizzardpaw meowed back.

*

After they dropped off the piece of prey, the two cats went to the Ocean Side to have Blizzardpaw swim.

"Blizzardpaw, all I want you to do is swim in a circle three times." Sandcoat ordered.

"Alright!" she replied and padded into the water, shivering a bit as she felt the chilly water on her fur. She got more into the water and couldn't feel the cold sand under her anymore and then swam.

It was a little while before she swam her second circle. She was panting now. *I can do this!* Blizzardpaw thought as she pushed herself to swim in a third circle. Once she finished, she swam out of the water onto shore. She was panting, but she saw the look on Sandcoat's face. He had a very wide smile.

"Did I do good, Sandcoat?" Blizzardpaw asked.

His smile faded. "No, you didn't do great, Blizzardpaw..."

"Huh...?"

"You did amazing!" He purred as his smile came back.

Blizzardpaw gasped and also gained an enormous smile. She bounced around happily. "I will be a warrior! I will be a warrior!" She repeated.

"You will! Now let's head back to camp. I'll tell Shellstar and I'm sure you'll become a warrior tomorrow!" Sandcoat meowed happily.

Blizzardpaw did her best to hold back her tears, but they started coming down, anyway.

I'm making you proud, Icejaw! She thought as she followed Sandcoat back.

Chapter 23

Nova didn't know what do to about Blacksting at this point. It's like he had every Vertexclan member wrapped around his paws. Nova decided she would sit by the Ocean Side for a while. She didn't feel like being in camp right now. The Vertexclan medicine cat watched the sun float above the water line in the distance. *I wonder how far the sun is...* She thought and sighed. Does her leader prefer goatweed over his clan? How could he? Doesn't he want his clan to get bigger and stronger than Driftclan? Nova gave another sigh. What was she going to do now?

"N-Nova!" There was a voice that yelled from far down the Ocean Side. She looked to her left to see a brown cat running down the shore towards her.

Is that... Otterpelt?! Nova thought, then widened her eyes at the sight of the Driftclan medicine cat running up to her.

"Otterpelt? What are you doing here?"

"I was just going to look for some herbs, then I saw you!" She exclaimed, catching her breath now. "I figured out the rest of the prophecy!"

Nova's ears shot up quickly. "Really?!" she jumped up onto her paws.

"Yes! The last word that Thorntail didn't get out was shred." Otterpelt mewed.

"The blizzard will stop the shred..." Nova repeated to herself.

"Blizzardpaw *has* to have something to do with this then!" Otterpelt meowed, "But if she does, then what is this shred she would have to stop?" The brown-furred she-cat questioned.

Nova thought for a second, then gasped, "I think this might have to

do with Shredpaw too!"

"But why would Shredpaw need to be stopped?" Otterpelt asked Nova.

"I don't know, but we must watch them both closely. Especially Shredpaw. We don't know what could happen in the moons to come." she meowed back with a sparkle in her eyes.

"Sounds like a plan to me!" Otterpelt said.

*

Shredpaw never thought this would happen. He never thought Blacksting would go this far as to kill his mother. Shredpaw lost touch with reality when he saw his mother get killed by his father. He endured all this pain so Dustshine wouldn't get hurt. Blacksting had lied to him. Shredpaw wanted nothing more, but his father gone and his mother back by his side. Blacksting had told Birdstar that another fox had attacked them and killed Dustshine while they were training. Shredpaw knew that wasn't true, Blacksting knew this wasn't true, and maybe even all of Vertexclan knew. Even the leader is too scared to do something about Blacksting.

Shredpaw felt alone.

He felt that no other cat besides Dustshine truly cared for him. He wanted to see her again, but he couldn't because of the one that murdered her. Shredpaw wanted to set a vigil for her, but Blacksting didn't allow him to because today Shredpaw is having his "warrior assessment". He waited in the corner of the Apprentices' den. He didn't want to move at all.

He wanted Blacksting to kill him, too.

Shredpaw wanted to die and be with his mother in Starclan, and he doesn't care how he dies either.

As long as he's with Dustshine.

Shredpaw heard pawsteps come into the den. It was none other than Blacksting. "We're doing your assessment. Let's go now," He

meowed.

Shredpaw didn't reply and just followed Blacksting.

*

Blacksting took Shredpaw to a tiny cave that had a big rock next to it. "Go inside," he ordered. Shredpaw did as he was told and padded into the cave. It didn't go any farther back, it was just a small cave.

"Now stay here. I'll be back whenever I feel like it," Blacksting snarled, then pushed the rock over the entrance of the cave. Shredpaw only wondered how he could push such a big of a rock. Once he finished closing the entrance, the cave was black now. Shredpaw couldn't see anything. He didn't care at this point.

"I just want to die! Is that too much to ask for? I'm tired of living this pointless life!" He yelled, and it echoed in the cave. Shredpaw wanted to cry, but he didn't see a point in doing that either.

Hello, friend! It was Shred's voice in his head again.

"Leave me alone!" Shredpaw yelled again.

But why? We're stuck in here together!

"Dustshine is dead, Blacksting is alive."

Just kill him!

Shredpaw's ears shot up at Shred's words. "What did you say?"

Kill him, of course!

"He's much stronger than me... How would I even do it?"

With my help!

"Are... You sure?" Shred had piqued Shredpaw's interest.

Yep! After you're made a warrior, we'll make a plan!

Shredpaw only gave an ominous smile.

Shredpaw would plan to kill his father.

Chapter 24

Blizzardpaw was already awake. She was just too excited to receive her warrior name. She's worked very hard for this and she passed her assessment. The question is when would the ceremony happen though? *It definitely will happen today...* She thought. Blizzardpaw got up from her nest in the Apprentices' den. She looked at Damppaw peacefully sleeping next to her. It wouldn't be long before he became a warrior, too. *And then we could... Hehe, I'll think about that later on...* She happily thought and trotted outside of the den. *I wonder what Otterpelt is doing?* Blizzardpaw thought and decided that she would head on over to the medicine den. Once she got in there, she saw Otterpelt, Rushstreak, Sandcoat, and Thistlepaw.

"What's going on here?" Blizzardpaw meowed, every cat now looking at her.

"Hi, Blizzardpaw!" Thistlepaw mewed back.

Sandcoat cleared his throat. "As you might see, Rushstreak has my kits in her belly."

Rushstreak looked away with a blush.

Blizzardpaw gasped. "Really?! I'm so happy for you two!" Her tail lashed as she gave an enormous smile.

"Well, Rushstreak, you can still train Damppaw for a little while before you have to move to the Nursery. Just don't push yourself, okay?" Otterpelt meowed.

"Thank you, Otterpelt," Rushstreak replied and padded out of the den Sandcoat behind her.

"If you need me, you know where to find me!" Otterpelt called to them, then she turned to Thistlepaw. "We must talk to Shellstar and your current mentor Stormfish first before you can become a medicine cat apprentice." she meowed.

"Okay!" she replied happily.

"Thistlepaw, you will be a medicine cat?" Blizzardpaw questioned her.

"Yeah, if Shellstar and Stormfish are okay with it! I've had an enormous interest in helping the clan in other ways..." she mewed.

"That's great! I wish you the best of luck with it!" Blizzardpaw purred and smiled at her.

Thistlepaw smiled back. "Thank you!"

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" It was Shellstar who yelled from outside.

It's finally time! Blizzardpaw thought with excitement as she headed outside the medicine den to the Tide Pool. All of Driftclan gathered around the Tide Pool now. Most knew what it was for.

"I have gathered you all here today because there will be a new warrior. Blizzardpaw please step forward," Shellstar meowed.

Blizzardpaw stepped up to the Tide Pool.

"Blizzardpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" The clan leader asked.

"I do!"

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Blizzardpaw, from this moment you will be known as Blizzardfluff. Starclan honors your kindness, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan," He meowed.

"You may dip your nose in the Tide Pool." Shellstar added.

Blizzardfluff dipped her nose into the Tide Pool and then took it out.

"Blizzardfluff! Blizzardfluff! Blizzardfluff!" The clan cheered her name as she proudly puffed her chest out. Then she padded over to

Sandcoat. "Congratulations Blizzardfluff!" he said, purring happily.

"Thank you, Sandcoat!", She replied.

"I'm glad you were my apprentice. Hopefully, the skills I passed down to you will get passed to another apprentice." the cream furred tom smiled.

"If I get an apprentice one day, I'll make sure of it!" Blizzardfluff meowed.

Sandcoat chuckled, "I hope you do, I'll see you in the warriors' den Blizzardfluff," He replied and headed back.

Blizzardfluff then saw Sagethorn and Icejaw pad up to her with smiles on their faces. Blizzardfluff also gained a wide smile on hers and ran up to both of them. She nuzzled up against them both. "Sagethorn, Icejaw! I'm a warrior now!" she exclaimed.

Sagethorn nodded. "Well, we saw you become one Blizzardfluff!" she purred.

"I am so very proud of you Blizzardfluff, I couldn't be any happier! My kit is all grown up now!" Icejaw held tears back as he nuzzled her.

"And your fur is much more fluffy now! How will you even get it clean?" Sagethorn meowed.

"Sagethorn!" Blizzardfluff blushed.

"Hehe, sorry I just had to!" Sagethorn replied, then giggled.

I'll keep making you two and the clan proud! Blizzardfluff thought and purred.

Chapter 25

Shredpaw wasn't happy, nor was he completely sad, either. He just wanted to get revenge for his mother, Dustshine. Shredpaw didn't think he would have the capability of killing Blacksting at first, but now he realizes it is possible. He just needs to wait for the right moment when the time comes. Today he would become a warrior of Vertexclan. He doesn't care about that though, all he wants to do is kill his father. "Why can't we do it right after I'm a warrior?" Shredpaw meowed to himself, but it was to Shred.

Because if we do it right after that, it would be the wrong time! Shred replied.

"Alright, I guess..." Shredpaw sighed and sat in the Apprentices' den alone. He heard pawsteps enter the den, and he looked up to see Nova. She had a delightful smile on her face as she padded over to Shredpaw.

"Hey, Shredpaw... I heard about Dustshine. I'm very sorry because I know you cared about her a lot. I hope you know she cared for you a lot, too. Even if it didn't seem like it.." She meowed and placed her tail over her paws as she sat down.

Shredpaw frowned a little. "It's okay. I know she cared a lot about me, but if I ever see that fox again, I will kill it," Shredpaw growled lowly, he knew he was lying about how Dustshine had died, but he wanted to keep that away from Nova to prevent her from getting hurt by Blacksting too.

"You don't have to do that!" Nova exclaimed. "That's too dangerous!"

"I think I'll be okay," Shredpaw replied and sighed. *I'm glad she's not asking if Blacksting did it...* He thought.

"Did Blacksting have anything to do with Dustshine's death?" Nova questioned.

They both were silent for a few heartbeats.

"No, of course not!" Shredpaw meowed, "Blacksting may seem terrible, but he loved Dustshine too much. Why would you think that?" Shredpaw wanted to spill out everything to Nova, but he knew he couldn't.

"*May* seem terrible? He never came to check on you two when you were just a kit! He's the reason your brother Sootkit got killed during Dustshine's kitting!" Nova then slapped her tail over her mouth, realizing what she just said.

"What...?"

"Please, don't mind what I just said..." Nova pleaded.

"I had a brother?"

Nova gave a heavy sigh, "Y-Yes, you did... When Dustshine was having you, there was another kit, and he... Wasn't breathing..." Her mew shook a little.

"How was Blacksting involved with this?" Shredpaw was getting furious, but he didn't let it show.

"When I came back to the Nursery that day, Blacksting was standing there watching Dustshine kit you both. Sootkit wasn't moving at all and you were perfectly fine." she meowed.

Shredpaw had no words.

"Look, Shredpaw, I'm sorry I-"

"My fellow clanmates of Vertexclan, gather around the Sharp Stone for a clan meeting!" It was the voice of Birdstar coming from outside the apprentices' den.

Shredpaw got up and padded out of the den silently. Nova watched with a look of worry in her eyes.

Shredpaw watched as all of Vertexclan gathered by the Sharp Stone. He looked around for Blacksting; he was sitting by the Warriors' den

with a blank face. Then he yawned. Shredpaw padded over to the Sharp Stone.

"I will appoint a new warrior today, Shredpaw. Please step forward." Birdstar meowed.

Shredpaw did as he was told and stepped forward.

"Shredpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?" Birdstar asked.

"I do."

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Shredpaw, from this moment you will be known as Shredflash. Starclan honors your strength, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Vertexclan."

"Shredflash! Shredflash! Shredflash!" Vertexclan cheered his name.

Shredflash looked behind him to see Blacksting only smirk and head back into the warriors' den.

Time to plan... Shredflash thought and gained an ominous look on his face.

Chapter 26

"I have to find somewhere to hide!" meowed Blizzardfluff as she ran away from something past the trees behind Driftclan. Her fur got stained with blood and some chunks of her fur were missing. She ran behind a tree and stopped so she could catch her breath. Blizzardfluff didn't know what was chasing her at all, it just attacked her and hurt her badly. *Maybe it's gone now...?* She thought and peeked her head slowly from behind the tree. She looked both ways and saw that nothing was there at all. "P-Phew..." Blizzardfluff meowed, still panting a little. The she-cat then felt a presence behind her. She turned around slowly.

"Oh, no..." The thing that was chasing her pounced and latched onto her. It was a gigantic shadow with huge teeth and red eyes. Blizzardfluff closed her eyes as it opened its maw, ready to eat her.

But before it got to her, Blizzardfluff woke up with a jolt in the Warriors' den. She looked around to see only Eelspeck and Sandcoat sleeping peacefully in their nests. Rushstreak had to go to the Nursery since it's very hard to train an apprentice when you have kits in your belly. *I can only wonder what her kits will look like!* Blizzardfluff thought and got up. She stretched before she left the warriors' den.

"Blizzardfluff can you come over here please!" Blizzardfluff looked over to see the Driftclan deputy Featherdrip standing with Icejaw and Hailpad yell her name from the entrance of the camp. She padded on over to them.

"I'm having you patrol the territory with Hailpad and Icejaw. Is that alright with you?" She meowed.

"Of course!" Blizzardfluff gave a wide smile and purred. *My first patrol!* She thought.

"Patrol closer around the borders, Birdstar's scent has been more strong there recently and we need to find out if there's anything he's

hiding." Featherdrip said.

"You got it." Icejaw meowed.

"Okay!" Blizzardpaw replied.

Hailpad only nodded and smiled.

"Good, now get going." she ordered and once she did, the three warriors set off.

*

"Now what are these leaves called again?" Otterpelt asked Thistlepaw as she put her paw on a plant.

"Dock leaves!" Thistlepaw replied excitedly.

"Good! And what are they used for?"

"Uh... Soothes... Pain?" She mewed back.

"You got it! You are learning fast, Thistlepaw, I am impressed!" Otterpelt purred.

Thistlepaw smiled brightly. She was glad that Shellstar and Stormfish were okay with her becoming a medicine cat. Stormfish didn't seem that into training her and Thistlepaw herself always questioned what Otterpelt did and now she gets to be part of what she does!

"You think you could get some dock leaves by yourself?" Otterpelt asked.

Thistlepaw had to think for a little, she's only been a medicine cat apprentice for a little while. She didn't know if she could handle such a task by herself, but she wanted to try her best and do it. "Sure! Where are they at?" Thistlepaw mewed.

"They shouldn't be too far off from the territory." Otterpelt said. "You can even smell the dock leaves right here to help you out if you'd like!" She insisted. Thistlepaw nodded and sniffed the dock

leaves in front of her. It had a very tangy smell.

"Got it down?"

"Yep!" Thistlepaw's tail lashed.

"Alright! They shouldn't be too far off at all. They are close to camp, so you shouldn't have a tough time finding them at all," Otterpelt meowed.

"Okay! I'll be going now!" Thistlepaw mewed back as she padded out of the medicine den.

"Good luck!" Otterpelt called.

*

"Look at you Blizzardfluff! On your first patrol and with me too!" Icejaw exclaimed as they padded through a few shrubs and bushes around Driftclan territory.

Blizzardfluff blushed a little. "Yeah! It's nice too, I could get used to patrolling the territory like this!" she meowed.

"You are very right," Hailpad meowed, but then he stopped in his tracks, sniffing the air. "I caught a scent of Vertexclan close by..."

"You think so?" Blizzardfluff asked and sniffed the air, she's only smelled the scent of Vertexclan once and that was at the gathering a few moons ago.

Icejaw sniffed the air himself, "He's right, it seems like Birdstar *has* been around alright."

"We could follow the scent and *maybe* find out where he's been hanging around?" Blizzardfluff suggested.

"Great idea! Let's look around here and if either of you two notices Birdstar's scent getting stronger, say something, okay?" Hailpad meowed.

Both Icejaw and Blizzardfluff nodded and continued to sniff around

for more of the Vertexclan leaders' scent.

*

Thistlepaw had found the dock leaves, but there was another scent that she could smell. It was very unfamiliar to her, so out of curiosity, she followed where the strange scent was coming from.

"Surely Otterpelt wouldn't mind if I left for a little longer!" Thistlepaw meowed to herself as she continued to follow the scent. As she did, it had gotten stronger as she got closer. Was it another cat's scent? *Yes, but there is the scent of a... Herb too?* She thought.

Thistlepaw moved the branches of a bush to find a lot of a yellow tiny flower plant with a couple of leaves on it. *What is this?* She thought as she sniffed it some more; *It has that cat's scent on it too!*

"Hey, who's there? Show yourself!" Thistlepaw quickly turned around as she heard the voice of a cat yell from behind her.

*

Blizzardfluff heard the crunching of grass close to her. "Icejaw, Hailpad! I heard something over here!" She started running towards the sound and the two toms followed her.

*

Thistlepaw turned around quickly to see Blizzardfluff running up to her.

"Blizzardfluff?" Thistlepaw said.

"Thistlepaw? What are you doing here?" The fluffy she-cat questioned.

"Otterpelt wanted me to get some dock leaves, and I did, but I found these plants as well!" She replied. Icejaw and Hailpad ran up beside Blizzardfluff.

"Birdstar's scent is powerful here." Icejaw meowed. Hailpad nodded in agreement.

"Is that who's scent I smelled all over the plants?" Thistlepaw mewed.

"What plants?" Hailpad asked.

Thistlepaw used her paw to move the bush that had the suspicious smelling plants under it.

"You think this could be why Birdstar has been around our territory a lot?" Blizzardfluff meowed to Icejaw.

"The plants reek of his scent. I don't see why else he would come here." He replied, his tail swaying.

"Well, let's report it to Featherdrip and Shellstar then!" Blizzardfluff exclaimed.

"Yep, let's head back." Hailpad said, turning around and running back to camp along with the other cats.

Chapter 27

Shred had told Shredflash that he should try to sharpen his claws more often. So he did on rocks whenever he got the chance to. Shredflash doesn't get sleep as much as the rest of his clans do. He knows it's important, but it bothers him when he sleeps. He feels like Blacksting could attack and kill him at any moment, which is why he has to kill him before Blacksting even has a chance of getting to him. Shredflash has also been training himself on his own time to deliver the killing blow when he needs to. He's also been clawing at the trunks of trees outside of Vertexclan territory so other members of his clan would not notice.

Shredflash looked over at his father, Blacksting. He was sleeping. He could attack him right now while he's sleeping, but that wouldn't be smart because Shred told him he should wait for a good opening. Shredflash was trying to think to himself until a set of paws stood in front of him. He looked up to see Cloudthorn, the youngest of Greenscar's three daughters. She was blushing as she stared at Shredflash.

"H-Hi Shredflash!" She meowed.

"Hello." He meowed back, licking his paw and then rubbing it over his head.

Cloudthorn looked away. She was still blushing. "I was wondering if you would want to share a piece of prey with me and sit with me by the Ocean Side?"

"Uh, sure? But what if we have to hunt or-"

Cloudthorn quickly cut him off. "I already have that taken care of! I told Birdstar and Skybelly I would be on every dawn patrol after today!"

"Okay... Let's go eat that piece of prey then," Shredflash meowed and got up. Cloudthorn gave an enormous smile as she and

Shredflash left the Warriors' den.

Blacksting was just silently watching as the two cats left.

*

Shredflash and Cloudthorn had shared a nice and juicy squirrel was in the fresh-kill pile. But before they left the camp, Shredflash saw as Skybelly padded over to Blacksting. He couldn't tell what they were talking about, but Blacksting headed to Birdstar's den afterward.

I can only wonder what Birdstar needs Blacksting for... Shredflash thought before his thoughts got cut off by Cloudthorn yelling. "Hey, Shredflash! You coming?" She meowed.

"Yeah, I am now!" He meowed back and headed over to Cloudthorn. Then they both left camp.

*

Blacksting padded into Birdstar's den. He had no clue what he needed, but the tom knew what it would be about. Once he got in there, Birdstar looked up at him with anger in his eyes. "Blacksting, did you mess with the goatweed?" he questioned.

Blacksting rolled his eyes. "No, if I did, then it would be with meaning." He meowed.

"I can only suspect you, you're the only one besides me who knows where the goatweed is!" Birdstar exclaimed.

"Am I the only one who knows?" Blacksting smirked.

Birdstar was quiet for a moment.

"I'm just kidding, anyway. Was my scent even there? If it wasn't, then how could it have been me?" Blacksting said.

"N-No... But there weren't any scents there that I could smell! Besides a little of Driftclan, of course... The bush it was behind got moved, so I assumed it was you..." Birdstar looked away.

"Driftclan cats could have found your little farm already, didn't you think of that?" Blacksting shot back.

"Well, I-"

"They probably have smelled your scent more than you've smelt theirs. Now they probably know why you're over there all the time!" Blacksting exclaimed.

Birdstar went quiet again, still looking away from Blacksting.

"I'll be going back to the warriors' den now." He headed back out to Birdstar's den. "Oh, and also, I want you to make me the new deputy of Vertexclan instead of Skybelly. I'll be waiting until tomorrow. If not, then you *will* face my wrath." Blacksting laughed to himself while completely leaving the den.

Birdstar did not know what his next move would be.

*

Shredflash and Cloudthorn have been strolling down the Ocean Side for a while. Cloudthorn had talked about how being a warrior is fun and her sisters and her visit their mother in the Elders' den a lot.

You know what she wants from you, right? Shred said in his head. Shredflash got confused, but he continued listening to Cloudthorn. She then stopped and turned to him. "There was a reason I brought you out here, Shredflash..." She mewed and blushed heavily.

"Why is that?"

"I... want... to be your mate, Shredflash!" Cloudthorn blurted out.

Shredflash's eyes widened. He had no words at all for what this she-cat had told him.

You already know why you can't Shredflash. Don't be too harsh on her now... Shred's voice echoed.

"Cloudthorn... I'm flattered, but-"

"Please don't say no!" tears were falling out of her eyes. "Ever since

you became a warrior, I've had my eyes on only you! I want to have kits with you and I'll protect you and them both if I have to!" she cried.

"Cloudthorn, I cannot be your mate," Shredflash meowed, now getting a serious look on his face.

"W-Why? Do you already have a mate...? Am I not good enough for you..?"

Shredflash sighed. "It's neither of those things. I cannot explain why I can't be mates with you. I will not push this any farther than it has to be and I suggest you don't either. I'm going back to camp, I'll see you there." Shredflash turned away from Cloudthorn and headed back to Vertexclan camp. Cloudthorn sat on the sand with tears falling onto it as she watched Shredflash pad away.

You did the right thing... Shred said.

Shredflash knew he couldn't be mates with her, it was for her safety.

He knew what he would do tomorrow:

Kill Blacksting.

Chapter 28

"So these plants are the reason Birdstar is always around our territory?" Shellstar questioned Otterpelt, who had Thistlepaw right next to her.

"Yes, that is what Thistlepaw here has told me. She found them along with Blizzardfluff, Hailpad, and Icejaw." Otterpelt meowed.

"Yeah! They had his scent all over them!" Thistlepaw added.

"Hmm, alright, get Featherdrip in here and I will speak with her about it." He meowed.

"Alright." Otterpelt replied, leaving his den along with Thistlepaw.

Well, the plants must be special if Birdstar has them around my territory... Shellstar thought, sniffing the plant. It didn't have a scent at all. *It doesn't have a scent, it must have a wonderful taste then I guess...* Shellstar would eat the plant, but he decided against it since even Otterpelt doesn't know what it is. The Driftclan leader looked up as he saw Featherdrip pad into his den. "You needed me, Shellstar?" She meowed.

"Yes, these plants are mostly why Birdstar is on our territory a lot." He meowed back.

Her eyes widened a little. "Really? What are they?" Featherdrip turned her head to the side a little.

"I don't know, and Otterpelt doesn't know either. Only Birdstar knows, since he's the one that plants and grows them," Shellstar meowed.

"Oh..."

"Well, when you organize dawn patrols from now on, I want you to have them stay closer around the borders. Maybe we can spot Birdstar soon enough so we can interrogate him." the tom said.

"Got it!" Featherdrip replied with a smile, and padded out of his den.

Shellstar then got up. "I think it's time for two new warriors." he meowed and padded out of his den.

*

Blizzardfluff sat in the warriors' den thinking to herself until she heard a yell come from outside of the den. It was from Shellstar.

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!"

Blizzardfluff came out of the warriors' den and watched as every other Driftclan cat came around to the Tide Pool. She joined the group of cats.

"I have gathered you all here today because there will be two new warriors, Eaglepaw please step forward," Shellstar meowed.

Eaglepaw did as he was told and stepped up to the Tide Pool.

"Eaglepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" The clan leader asked.

"I do."

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Eaglepaw, from this moment you will be known as Eagleswoop. Starclan honors your skill, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan," He meowed.

"Thank you, Shellstar." Eagleswoop meowed.

"Now Damppaw, please step forward."

Damppaw had stepped up to the Tide Pool.

"Damppaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?"

"I do."

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Damppaw, from this moment you will be known as Dampbreeze. Starclan honors your determination, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan."

"You may both dip your noses in the Tide Pool." Shellstar added and smiled.

Eagleswoop and Dampbreeze dipped both of their noses in the Tide Pool and then took them out.

"Eagleswoop! Dampbreeze! Eagleswoop! Dampbreeze!" Driftclan cheered both of the new warriors' names. Blizzardfluff noticed Dampbreeze padding up to her afterward.

"Hey, Dampbreeze! Congratulations on becoming a warrior!" She meowed.

"Thanks, Blizzardfluff, I've been waiting forever for this to happen so I could ask you something." He replied blushing a bit.

"Ask me what?" Blizzardfluff questioned.

"Will you... Be my mate?" Dampbreeze asked, blushing even more now.

Blizzardfluff gasped and gave a wide smile. "Of course I will!" she blushed as well and nuzzled up against her new mate happily.

Dampbreeze was happier than he's ever been in his life. He couldn't wait to see where the future would take them both.

Chapter 29

Nova felt very uneasy today, not as in sick, but as in she felt like something was deeply wrong. She couldn't put her paw on it at all. Was it Birdstar? The cat who prefers a plant over his clan? No. Was it Blacksting? The cat who's possibly abused his son and possibly traumatized him for the rest of his life?

Was it Shredflash?

No, it couldn't be... He's fine... Or at least I think he is? Nova thought as she padded outside of the medicine den and looked around the clan. Everything seemed fine, so there was nothing to worry about, right?

Right?

Everything that's happened in the past few moons has been an interesting time for Nova. Sometimes Nova wonders if she will ever get an apprentice under her because what happens when she's gone? What would Vertexclan do then?

Well, I better hope that one of Greenscar's daughters has kits soon... Nova thought, then padded over to the fresh-kill pile. She picked a nice one and ate it. As she was eating it, another she-cat padded up to her.

It was Scorchwatcher, the eldest of Greenscar's daughters. She had a look of worry in her eyes. "Is Cloudthorn in the medicine den? I haven't seen her in a while and I am anxious about her." She meowed.

"Well, unfortunately, she is not in the medicine den. Did she tell you anything about leaving camp?" Nova asked.

"Cloudthorn last told me she was going to the Ocean Side with Shredflash and it wouldn't take long, but it's been long enough already!" Scorchwatcher exclaimed as she was anxious about her

younger sister.

"I'm sure she's fine. Shredflash wouldn't harm any cat!" Nova replied.

Would he?

Scorchwatcher turned around to the entrance of the camp to see Shredflash pad in. She ran over to him and stopped him in his tracks. "Shredflash, where's Cloudthorn at?"

"I thought she would be behind me, but she might still come back from the Ocean Side." He replied.

"Why wouldn't you stay with her, you gull-brain!" Scorchwatcher meowed angrily.

Shredflash only shrugged.

Scorchwatcher growled and then rushed out of the camp to find Cloudthorn. Nova only watched as Shredflash sighed and padded back to the Warriors' den with a slight smirk as he entered.

*

The time is soon Shredflash, he's sleeping right now... Shred said in the toms' head as he padded into the warriors' den. Shredflash stood at the entrance of it. He saw Smokedream and Stagwhisper chatting and Blacksting sleeping peacefully.

It wouldn't be peaceful for him for long.

Shredflash's smirk only widened as he thought about the blood he would spill from his father. He wanted Blacksting to feel the pain and suffering that he put him through as an apprentice and Dustshine.

You know you want him dead...

Shredflash unsheathed his claws as he got closer to Blacksting, drool was falling from his mouth as he growled lowly. As soon as he was close enough to his father:

Now.

Shredflash jumped and pounced onto Blacksting. He dug his claws into his back and raked them down, which caused Blacksting to get up and yowl in pain. Both Smokedream and Stagwhisper looked up in horror as they watched Shredflash attack Blacksting.

Blacksting attempted to shake Shredflash off, but it was of no use to him, and Shredflash only bit into his right shoulder, causing blood to spurt out and Blacksting to yowl in pain once again. Blacksting clawed at Shredflash, only hitting his muzzle, but it didn't phase him. Shredflash clawed at Blacksting's right eye, causing him to screech and fall back a little. This gave Shredflash the chance to pin his father down, so he tackled him once more and pinned him, his claws digging into his shoulders once more. Blacksting tried to shake him off again, but he was losing energy.

Smokedream and Stagwhisper both ran out of the warriors' den.

"This is for everything you put me through!" Shredflash snarled and clawed all over Blacksting's face, chest, and belly, causing more blood to spill onto the ground.

Do it.

"And this is for Dustshine, you worthless father!" Shredflash bit into the side of Blacksting's neck and pulled as hard as he could. Blacksting's eyes rolled back into his head as his maw filled and gurgled with blood.

Shredflash bit out a chunk of Blacksting's neck, killing him instantly.

Shredflash spat out the chunk by the side of his now-dead father and got off of him. Blood had stained his fur, claws, and teeth. He stared at the lifeless body of his father.

He did it.

Blacksting was finally dead.

Shredflash padded out of the warriors' den only to see the faces of

Birdstar and Skybelly.

"Shredflash... What have you done?" Birdstar's voice shook.

"I killed Blacksting, that's good, right? He tortured my mother and me... So I made him pay!" His bloodstained smile widened.

"Killing your clan member... Isn't good at all, Shredflash!" Skybelly growled.

Shredflash's smile faded away, didn't they know Blacksting was bad?

They want you dead now, Shredflash, get them. Shred's voice echoed and Shredflash got angry.

Shredflash unsheathed his claws and in a heartbeat, they were in Birdstar's throat. He coughed up blood. A few clan members had seen Shredflash do it. Skybelly's eyes widened immensely.

Go! Before they get you!

Shredflash took his claws out of his leaders' throat, blood spilling everywhere around him, as Birdstar fell to the ground. He then ran as fast as he could out of Vertexclan.

He continued running and didn't look back.

*

Nova was only curious about why she saw Smokedream and Stagwhisper run out the warriors' den. Then she got even more curious about Birdstar and Skybelly running over there themselves.

She saw as Shredflash came out of there. Then he seemed like he got angry. Nova then stood up quickly. She could not believe what she just saw. The Vertexclan medicine cat watched as Shredflash run away and her leader fall onto the ground.

Did... Shredflash just kill Birdstar?!

Chapter 30

Shredflash doesn't know where he ran, all he knows is that he ran away from Vertexclan. He's already told himself that he's never going back because if he did, they would either kill him or just exile him from being there. Shredflash stopped and hid in a bush to catch his breath. He had run very far away. "What are we going to do now, Shred?" Shredflash meowed, still panting.

We survive out here in the wild until we make our next move, friend! Shred replied in a happier and more friendly tone. When Shredflash was in Vertexclan, Shred had a dark and low tone to him, but now it sounds friendly.

"And what is that next move?" He replied to him.

You'll find out when the time comes! Shred giggled, and it echoed in Shredflash's head.

"Okay, I guess... For now, we need to find prey so we can live. Hopefully, there is prey around here..." Shredflash meowed as he jumped out of the bush he was hiding behind. His unfamiliar task for himself was to survive out here.

*

It's been what has felt like a few sunrises, and Shredflash has caught no prey. He was starving, and his movements have gotten very slow. Shredflash was never taught how to hunt properly as an apprentice, Blacksting only put him through pain and torture. He fell to the ground as he heard his stomach growl.

"I can't die out here... Not like this..." He meowed softly.

Shredflash saw a set of paws pad up to him. They were black. He slowly looked up to see the face of a black she-cat with violet-blue eyes hold a piece of prey in her jaws. "Look at you, you poor thing! Eat this." She meowed and dropped what looked like a squirrel.

Shredflash moved enough to take a bite out of it and sat up a little as he ate it. "T-Thank you." He meowed through a mouthful.

The she-cat giggled. "Yep! I can take you back to where I live until you are ready to go back home!" She insisted.

"Sure, but I don't have a home..." Shredflash said.

The black she-cat gasped. "Really?!"

Shredflash nodded.

"Well, if you'd like, you can stay with me!" She meowed.

Shredflash had to think for a moment. He didn't even know her name yet!

"Oh, my name is Eclipse!" she added.

"I'm Shredflash." he replied, swallowing the rest of what was in his maw.

"Shredflash, huh? Your name is very interesting!" Eclipse meowed.

You might as well stay with her, Shredflash! Maybe you two can be mates, even!

Shredflash blushed and smiled at Eclipse. "I'll stay with you."

Eclipse smiled back. "You will? That's great! I'll show you the way there."

Shredflash got up and followed Eclipse as they headed away from the spot they met at.

Chapter 31

It's been about 2 moons since Shredflash and Eclipse had met. Eclipse lived in a pleasant area with a ton of trees and plants. She lived in a nice little cave around some trees and hidden by some bushes. Inside of the cave were her pile of fresh-kill that she will share with Shredflash now and a nice little nest that she increased the size so Shredflash could sleep next to her.

"You don't have to do this for me..." Shredflash meowed to her.

Eclipse smiled. "I'm fine with it! If you will stay with me, then I might as well make you comfy too!" She blushed and purred.

Shredflash watched as she continued to fix up the nest for him.

She turned around, still blushing. "Plus, I like you a lot too!" Eclipse meowed, then turned back to the nest once again.

Shredflash blushed himself, she's been so nice to him all this time and hasn't gotten bothered by him at all. *You might as well become mates with her! It'll be good for you!* Shred giggled.

"H-Hey Eclipse, I want to ask you something important..." the tom meowed, blushing harder than before. He watched as Eclipse turned around with a bigger smile on her face.

"What is it, Shredflash?"

"Will you be my mate?"

Eclipse nearly mewled in excitement, but she held it together. "Yes!" She came up to him and nuzzled against his neck a ton, purring a lot.

Shredflash felt something he hadn't truly felt in a while. It was happiness. He felt it when Dustshine was around, and especially felt it when Blacksting died. Shredflash couldn't accept Cloudthorn's love because she would've been in significant danger. Now that

Blacksting is dead, and he doesn't have to worry about Vertexclan, he can be happy with a mate and maybe even have kits.

Shredflash will do anything he could now to protect Eclipse.

Chapter 32

Two more moons had passed by since Shredflash and Eclipse became mates. Eclipse had laid herself out on the nest as she showed her now round belly. Shredflash padded into the small cave with a bird in his maw. "You alright in here, Eclipse?" he said with a muffled meow, padding up to her and placing the bird gently in front of her.

"I am." she meowed back and smiled, then she took a bite out of the bird.

"And the kits?" Shredflash sat next to Eclipse and gently put one paw on her belly, rubbing it a little.

"They are fine too, there's nothing to worry about." She smiled at him and then continued to eat the bird he got for him. Eclipse had taught Shredflash how to hunt properly once he told her he didn't know how to.

"Shredflash, please rest. You've been hunting all day for me! And I've told you I'm fine," Eclipse meowed.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes! Now please rest for me."

Shredflash gave a brief sigh as he laid himself down next to her. He didn't enjoy sleeping at all, but for her, he will do it for. He felt Eclipse turn around to lay her head onto him, her belly pointing the other way now. Shredflash slowly closed his eyes. He now felt like he needed to rest for a while.

*

"Hey! Wake up!" Shredflash heard a familiar voice and a few prods on his head. He opened his eyes quickly and got up to see a strange cat in front of him.

"You're finally awake, friend!" His voice oddly sounded like Shred.

"Shred, is that you?" Shredflash questioned, as he couldn't make out what Shred looked like.

"The one and only!" Shred replied.

"Why did you bring me here?" The tom looked around. It was pitch black all around him. Shredflash could barely see himself!

"Oh, I almost forgot..." His voice seemed to trail off slightly.

"Forgot what?"

"Your future kin is in danger. There's a cat you have to get rid of to prevent the deaths of Eclipse and your kits, Shredflash," He said.

"Who?" Shredflash was angry now. He would not let any cat do anything to Eclipse.

A light appeared in front of both of them. The light showed a grey tom with yellow eyes. "He is from Driftclan, you must wake up and go soon."

"How will I find Driftclan?" Shredflash asked.

"You are close to the ocean already. Just follow down the Ocean's Side and you will find your way to Driftclan," Shred had replied and suddenly disappeared, along with the light.

Shredflash woke up with a jolt.

Eclipse noticed and lifted her head. "Something wrong, Shredflash?"

"I have to go somewhere and do something. It's to protect you and the kits." He stood up and headed to the entrance of the cave. "Will you be okay on your own for a while?"

"Of course, but these kits in my belly will be a nuisance, though. And *please* be careful, I don't know what I'd do if I lost you..." She meowed.

"I promise I'll be careful. I will come straight back to you after I am finished." Shredflash went back over to his mate to lick her cheek before heading back over to the entrance.

"Promise?"

"I promise."

Shredflash padded out of the small cave. "Shred?"

Go left and just stay straight. You will see the ocean soon enough.

He nodded and started running in the direction Shred told him to. Shredflash would kill that Driftclan cat, no matter what.

Chapter 33

Blizzardfluff was sitting in the nursery. The pains in her lower area had increased today. Her kits could come at any moment. She gave a heavy sigh as she watched Rushstreak's kits chase each other around the den. Rushstreak had kitted at least a moon ago, kitting out two she-kits: A small brown and golden-furred kit with jade eyes named Hollowkit, and a white-furred kit with light brown eyes named Ripplekit. "Alright you two, calm down and lie next to me." Rushstreak ordered.

"Aw, but Rushstreak!" Hollowkit and Ripplekit protested.

"Come on now." she meowed.

Both she-kits groaned as they padded over by Rushstreak and lied down by her.

Blizzardfluff giggled a little, "They sure must be a pawful, huh?"

Rushstreak sighed. "Yeah, but I love em though!" she smiled. "You'll have your kits running around here soon too." she giggled.

Blizzardfluff smiled. "Yeah, that'll be fun-" she stopped mid-sentence as she winced at the increasing pain she felt in her belly and lower area.

Rushstreak's eyes widened, "Hollowkit, please go get Otterpelt!" She exclaimed. Hollowkit nodded and ran out of the Nursery.

I didn't think this would hurt this badly! Blizzardfluff thought as she held in a yell.

Hollowkit had come back with Otterpelt right behind her. She had a stick in her maw as she came over to Blizzardfluff. "Here Blizzardfluff, hold this in your maw for me, please." she ordered, and then the fluffy she-cat bit down on the stick as Otterpelt gave it to her.

"Now push as hard as you can for me, please."

Blizzardfluff nodded through pain and pushed. *This hurts even more!!!* She thought as she continued to push harder.

"Will she be okay, Rushstreak?" Ripplekit mewed worriedly.

Rushstreak licked her kit's head. "She will, so there's no need to worry," she meowed back.

"Almost there..." Otterpelt observed her. Blizzardfluff nearly broke the stick as a grey and tawny-furred kit was born. The kit was mewling for a little while before it suckled on its mother for milk.

"It's a tom!" Otterpelt exclaimed. "Congratulations Blizzardfluff!"

Blizzardfluff laid onto her side as her newly born son suckled on her. "Th-Thanks! I didn't think kitting would be so painful though!" She breathed and then gave a slight smile.

"That's also what I thought, but I guess we both thought wrong." Rushstreak meowed and giggled a little.

Every cat then looked at the entrance of the Nursery as they saw a certain tom pad in. It was Dampbreeze. His eyes widened as he saw the tom-kit by Blizzardfluff. He then went over to her and stared at his son in awe. "He's beautiful! What will you name him?" He meowed.

Blizzardfluff thought for a moment, then she smiled. "Mistkit." she meowed to Dampbreeze.

"I love it!" He replied happily, licking his mate's cheek, and purred.

Blizzardfluff and Dampbreeze watched as Mistkit stopped suckling and huddled up against his mother, snoring softly.

*

Featherdrip was talking to Icejaw about fishing by the Ocean Side.

"Sure, I can go by myself." He meowed to her.

"You sure? I can ask another warrior to join you if you'd like?"

"No, it'll be fine. Chances are I won't catch a fish as Eelspeck did a few moons ago!" Icejaw chuckled.

"Alright, don't stay out there too long now." Featherdrip meowed and padded away from Icejaw to the Warriors' den.

Icejaw would leave, but Sagethorn had stopped him in his tracks. "Hi, Sagethorn! Need something from me?"

"I just wanted to tell you that Blizzardfluff has kitted!" She meowed excitedly.

Icejaw gasped. "Really?! How many did she kit?"

"Only one, his name is Mistkit!"

"That's great! I'll go visit the Nursery after I go to the Ocean Side." he meowed to her.

"Okay! I'll see you later, then!" She licked Icejaw's cheek and then padded off to the Nursery again.

Icejaw then left camp to go to the Ocean Side.

*

Icejaw had caught two small fish. *Well, there's no other fish that I see... Guess I'll go back then!* He thought and picked up his prey and turned back around. Then he started back towards Driftclan.

He didn't notice the cat that was standing in the distance when he turned.

Chapter 34

Shredflash felt like he's been padding down the Ocean Side forever. He got hungry and caught a small gull and ate it. Then he continued his small journey to Driftclan.

"Are you sure that this is they way, Shred?" Shredflash asked, padding a little slower now.

Yes, trust me. I know it's taking a while, but you will know when you are close. Shred replied.

Shredflash sighed and kept on padding. He had to remind himself what he was doing this for. He was doing this for his mate and soon to be born kits. He wasn't letting anything impede them from being born. Shredflash will kill whoever stands in his way. But as he continued to pad on down the Ocean Side, he saw something in the distance. It was what seemed like a grey cat trying to catch some fish in the water. "Shred... Is that the cat?"

Shred didn't respond for a moment, but when he did, his voice was deeper. *Yes,* He said.

Shredflash stood and watched as the grey tom caught one fish, then another one. They both looked small. The grey tom then picked up both in his maw and padded back somewhere. *He might go back to Driftclan Shredflash, better hurry.* Shred had told him.

"I will kill him," Shredflash meowed and followed the grey cat. He did it slowly and carefully so the tom wouldn't notice that he was being followed.

*

Shredflash continued to follow the tom as he padded through more trees. The heavy scent of Driftclan hit his nose as he got closer to their territory.

"I'm surprised that they live this close to the ocean," Shredflash meowed quietly.

I'm surprised he doesn't notice that you are behind him yet, friend! Shred's voice echoed in Shredflash's head as he continued following him. The grey tom looked like he would head into his camp. The scent of Driftclan was even stronger than before.

Shredflash, once he enters his camp. You must get rid of him right there and then leave. Try to kill him as fast as you can.

Shredflash growled at the thought of that tom killing his family. He unsheathed his claws and started running towards him. The grey tom turned around and unsheathed his claws. But unfortunately, he was too late as Shredflash pounced on him and pinned him.

"Who are you?" The grey tom exclaimed as he clawed at Shredflash, but it wasn't enough to get him off.

Shredflash didn't respond as he took his claws in his right paw and dragged it across his face. Which caused him to yell, but Shredflash put his paw over the tom's maw. "Quiet," he hissed. Shredflash didn't know that a few cats had seen what was happening.

Better get this done quickly! A cat is running to you, Shredflash... Shred said.

Shredflash's anger rose, and he took his claws and dug them deeper into the tom's neck. He watched blood leak from it.

More! Shred yelled.

Shredflash then used both sets of his claws and dug into both sides of the Driftclan cats' neck. Blood continued to spill out of his neck as his body slowly stopped moving.

"Hey! Intruder!" It was the meow of a she-cat that was running towards Shredflash now. She had blue-grey fur and what are now angry green eyes.

Shredflash leave, now. We did our time here.

Shredflash hopped off of the tom and ran out of Driftclan territory. He turned around to see if any cat was chasing him, but there wasn't.

A cat might come after you, Shredflash, stay by the Ocean Side for a little while... Shred echoed in his head.

Shredflash stopped by the Ocean Side. He had blood all over his claws. He stared in the distance as he watched the sunrise above the water.

"Whatever it takes to protect my family," He meowed to himself.

Chapter 35

Blizzardfluff woke up. She was hungry. She looked down at Mistkit to see that he was sleeping peacefully. She got up carefully and looked at Rushstreak. "Could you watch Mistkit for me for a bit? I want to get some fresh-kill and bring it back." she meowed.

"Sure Blizzardfluff." Rushstreak replied. "Try not to take too long though, Otterpelt would have a fit."

"I won't at all!" Blizzardfluff quickly left the Nursery to get the piece of prey, but when she got out there, she stopped instantly as she stared at the entrance of the camp.

Her eyes widened. She couldn't believe what she was seeing.

"Icejaw!" Blizzardfluff yelled and ran over to her father on the ground.

*

Otterpelt and Thistlepaw sat in the medicine den, peacefully talking to each other. Until they both heard a yell come from outside of the den. "What was that Otterpelt?" Thistlepaw asked with a look of worry on her face now.

Otterpelt looked out of the den real quick to see Featherdrip running towards Icejaw, who was bleeding out on the ground. *What in the name of Starclan?* She thought, then pulled her head back in. "Thistlepaw, I need you to gather some cobwebs and come by the camp entrance, please!" she exclaimed and ran out of the medicine den.

"O-Okay!" Thistlepaw quickly gathered up some cobwebs.

Otterpelt ran over to Featherdrip and Icejaw, and Blizzardfluff was now with them. She had tears running down her face. Once the medicine cat got over there, she instantly went to Icejaw and saw

that both sides of his neck had big gashes in them and blood was still leaking out. She put both paws over the gashes to stop the bleeding. Icejaw was panting. "Calm down Icejaw, you'll be alright," Otterpelt meowed to him.

Thistlepaw had run over with the cobwebs and gave them to Otterpelt quickly. Otterpelt nodded to Thistlepaw and then took the cobwebs. She put them around the gashes in his neck. He was still panting. A lot of blood left him. Once she finished, she looked at him. "He's lost a lot of blood..." she whispered.

"That means nothing!" Blizzardfluff cried and licked Icejaw's cheek. "You're fine, right Icejaw?"

Icejaw slowly looked over at his daughter and gave a slight smile. "I remember when you were just a kit... You were always so excited to see me... You always wanted to make me proud..."

"Stop this!" tears were streaming down Blizzardfluff's face.

"Blizzardfluff, I am *very* proud of you. Remember that..." Icejaw smiled, and it faded away slowly as his eyes went blank.

Blizzardfluff's eyes widened, and she prodded her father. "Icejaw? Icejaw wake up, please! Icejaw!!!" She then put her head down on his chest, tears flooding out her eyes like a waterfall.

Otterpelt put her tail on Blizzardfluff. "I'm sorry..."

Blizzardfluff has never truly felt anger in her life, but now, she feels like a never-ending storm of anger has risen in her. She then stood up. "I'm going after that cat if it's the last thing I do."

"You can't! What if he *kills* you too?" Featherdrip meowed back.

"He won't because I will kill him first."

Otterpelt looked at Blizzardfluff for a second. *The blizzard will stop the shred!* She thought.

"Blizzardfluff, please be careful, you have a son to take care of, don't forget that," Otterpelt gave a worried look.

Blizzardfluff nodded and ran out of Driftclan camp.

She would go kill the cat who killed her father.

*

Blizzardfluff ran out of the trees onto the warm sand. She saw a cat staring off into the distance of water. "Hey!" she yelled.

The tom turned around slowly. There was a scar through his left eye. "Who are you?" his mew was deep.

"I'm Blizzardfluff, a warrior of Driftclan." she meowed back.

The tom suddenly remembers something, "You were that other apprentice that bothered me at the gathering many moons ago." He meowed.

Blizzardfluff's eyes widened. "You're Shredpaw?"

"Shredflash now."

"What made you kill Icejaw?" Blizzardfluff's claws unsheathed.

"Was that his name? He was a danger to my family. If he didn't die, then he would've killed them," Shredflash meowed.

"Icejaw had nothing to do with your family! He would never hurt cats like that... Do you know how much pain I felt when he died right in front of me?" Tears were falling from her eyes again.

Shredflash's eyes flashed with anger as he padded up to Blizzardfluff. "How much pain *you've felt*? You don't even know how much I've been through!" Shredflash snarled and clawed the side of Blizzardfluff's face. She jumped yowled and then jumped back.

"My father tortured me as an apprentice... He killed my mother right in front of me..." Shredflash said.

Blizzardfluff ran towards him, "That doesn't mean you kill other cats!" She yelled and pounced on him, her claws unsheathed, and dug into his shoulders.

"Cats that are a danger to my family!" Shredflash bit her left leg, which caused her to yell, and then he shook her off of him. She landed in the sand close, but not too close, next to Shredflash.

They both stood up and stared at each other.

"I'm giving you one chance. Either go back to your clan, or you will pay," Shredflash hissed.

"Not until you're dead!" Blizzardfluff ran towards Shredflash.

Shredflash sighed and ran towards Blizzardfluff.

They both tackled each other, claws unsheathed, both clawing and biting each other ruthlessly.

They fought for a few heartbeats until...

Blizzardfluff ended up on her back. Shredflash pinned her and had his claws dug into the right side of her throat. Blood leaked from it.

Shredflash was panting. "I've won."

He took his claws out, and as more blood gushed from her neck, Blizzardfluff was breathing harder now. Shredflash grabbed the back of her scruff with his maw and dragged her towards the water.

I... Couldn't do it... I was too weak... Blizzardfluff thought as her head hung low while Shredflash dragged her. The water felt icy as she felt it move against her dragging paws. Shredflash let go of her scruff, and her maw fell into the water. He then gained a crazed look on his face as he lifted one of his paws.

"My father taught me this one."

Shredflash put his paw on Blizzardfluff's head. He forced it down into the water.

All the memories that Blizzardfluff had been coming back to her now as she was losing air. She was doing her best to move, but losing blood made her weaker. She was losing more and more air.

Sagethorn... Icejaw... Sandcoat... Mistkit... I'm sorry, I have failed you all... Her movement was slowing, and her vision was disappearing.

Shredflash pushed his paw down a little further.

I'll see you in Starclan, Icejaw. Blizzardfluff gave her last thought before she stopped moving completely.

Shredflash saw her movement stop completely. He unsheathed his claws one last time. Then slowly and deeply dragged his claws along her chilly back. He made sure she was dead.

"Such a shame." Shredflash meowed.

He padded back down the Ocean Side. He was going back to his family.

Epilogue

"The prophecy was wrong?!" shouted a cat.

"I..." a tall starry furred cat only got that word out of his maw.

"Foxstar, the prophecy was wrong! What do we do?"

"I-I don't know!" Foxstar shouted.

"I guess it was just fate..." a cat padded up next to Foxstar.

Foxstar looked over at the cat. "Thorntail..."

"We should've told the prophecy sooner..." the old clan leader added.

"Those cats who died will join us in Starclan soon." another cat spoke up.

"I-I understand... Thank you for telling me..." Foxstar didn't know what to do.

Thorntail stared at him. "There's nothing we can do now, Foxstar, it's all over."

"It can't be... What about the other kit that was born?" One cat meowed.

"Mistkit, you mean?" Another jumped in.

"Enough!" Foxstar shouted, and every cat got quiet.

"We are done speaking of this." He meowed.

Thorntail watched as Foxstar padded off into the starry trees.

*

Nova didn't know how to feel anymore. Dustshine is dead,

Blacksting is dead, Birdstar has one life left, and Shredflash disappeared. Nova sat by where Blacksting got buried. They buried him right next to Dustshine, which was by a rotting tree near Vertexclan. Buzzardgaze came over to Nova once to set a short vigil for Blacksting, since Buzzardgaze was the only loyal friend Blacksting had. *Why did things have to end up like this? Was Shredflash even stopped?* She thought as she headed back to camp.

Nova then stopped in her tracks. "Hopefully he was..." she said to herself. "I guess I'll just have to keep wondering until I find out, eventually..."

Nova gave an enormous sigh.

"I *really* need an apprentice."

Trivia

Answering questions you may have, so here you go:

-Blacksting went to Starclan.

-Blacksting only went to Starclan because an old spirit from the Dark Forest possessed him.

-Dustshine knew what was happening to Shredpaw. She didn't take action because she loved Blacksting too much.

-Birdstar found out about goatweed as an apprentice.

-The Six Moons Of Torture is what Blacksting's training was called.

-The names "Nova" and "Eclipse" came from my growing interest in space.

-Birdstar eventually loses his last life from a goatweed overdose.

-Scorchwatcher and Stagwhisper become mates and have three kits. So do Cloudthorn and Rockcreek, but they have two kits.

-Shredflash and Eclipse have one kit.

-Thistlepaw becomes Thistlewhisper.

A/N: *Wow*! I did not think I would complete this book at all! I just want to give a big thanks to all of you that read it! I haven't thought about if I want to make a second book or not yet, though lol. Once school gets finished and blah, then I'll get to thinking about it.

Anyway, thank you for reading Warriors: Uprising! ❤️

(If there are any more questions you have, leave them in the comments or DM me! -OKW)

Book #2

The next book is now out!

It's Warriors: Retribution if you're looking for it.

😊❤